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Editorials

IS SYNCRETISM THE ANSWER?

MUCH is heard today of the decline of religion in the world's life and of the spread of secular and materialistic attitudes. What can be done to arrest this trend? There is one answer that has for many people a fascination: let the several religions join forces in their spiritual witness, or let them give way to a new religion, a composite of what is best in them all. The day is past for hoping that humanity can become religiously unified through some one religion becoming universal. Why not seek this unity through the essential truth in all the great religions?

The Baha'i movement, of Persian origin but with groups of adherents in the United States and Canada, heralds this approach to unity, being persuaded that fundamental beliefs are the same in all religious faiths. Of greater significance are Toynbee's thoughts on the future of religion, in his great work, *A Study of History*, vol. VII. For him, neither Christianity nor any other higher religion is "an exclusive and definitive revelation of spiritual truth". It is error or blasphemy to deny that "other religions may be God's chosen and sufficient channels for revealing Himself to some human souls". "Human nature is stamped with the fruitful diversity that is a hall-mark of God's creative work"; the diversity of the higher religions becomes in the light of this "a necessary corollary of the diversity of the Human Psyche". Hence the era of conflict between the religions should give place to mutual acknowledgment that each religion genuinely satisfies some widely experienced human need. The other course, to claim for one's own religion a monopoly of the Divine Light or that it holds all the Truth necessary for man's final good, is the way of *hybris*. How much more consonant to Christianity's own spirit to own the values in other faiths and rejoice in them! Or in our own form of the problem: in face of the world challenge of materialism will not more be gained by the co-operative temper and effort than by one religion standing off from the others in the belief that it alone possesses what man's spirit ultimately craves?

These questions, we say, many find enticing; but behind them are assumptions that involve deep issues, even issues of fact. Is it true that the teaching of the great religions is basically one; or in Toynbee's phrase again, that the rival forms of worship are "alternative approaches to the One True God along avenues offering divers partial glimpses of an identical Beatific Vision"? Or is what Christianity brings to men proper to itself and irreplaceable? This is a matter on which just now most Christians are far from clear.

Dr. E. R. Fairweather writes (Fairweather and Hettlinger, *Episcopacy and Reunion*, p. 1): "The Christian religion is founded on a divine act in history—the total act of redemption and self-revelation which God

decisively performed in Jesus Christ—and it must always be dependent on the unique event of the Gospel." Here there is no question of "alternative approaches"; as the same writer adds: "the once-for-all act of God to which the Gospel testifies, is the one genuine basis of religious life in every age." This, of course, does not preclude joint insistence with other religions on ethical and spiritual values against the current secular aggression; nor does it debar co-operation between Christians, Jews and others over wide areas of community good. But it retains along with this Christianity's *real* mission which it cannot yield to another: the proclamation of God's way for man in Jesus Christ. Any *rapprochement* between Christianity and other faiths is from the basis of this peculiar charge laid upon Christianity, and has its measure in Christianity's obligation to offer to men of all faiths its singular divine Word.

This is the position if the Christian Gospel, God's grace in Jesus Christ, is His one sufficient provision for man's spiritual need, and God decrees that all men have knowledge of it. The stress here in conceiving Christianity is on God's purpose of reconciliation and the Church's redemptive mission. The alternative case occurs if we begin by finding Christianity's chief meaning in its ethical teaching. Then the separateness of Christianity is not so apparent. Is the Christian ethical wisdom purer than this from the Indian Vishnu-Krishna: "He who is unconcerned about the things of the world, free from attachment to earthly things, without hate to any being—he is dear to me"? Or than this from Buddhism: "Let us cultivate love without measure toward all beings. Let us cultivate towards the whole world a heart of love unstinted, unmixed with the sense of differing interests. This state of heart is the best in the world"? The terms of this are as universal as anything in Christianity; seemingly the wall of partition between the religions vanishes if ethical doctrine is made the touchstone. The same is true if we add belief in God, for this too in noble forms is the ground and pillar of several of the religions. It is God in Christ that is of Christianity only, and gives it its message that is not found elsewhere.

This is the issue—that of Christianity's true and essential character—about which Christians today need new clarity and understanding. Is Christianity *the* way, or one of many ways; one of many visions of man's appointed goal? If the latter, then syncretism or synthesis may be the key: reciprocal giving and receiving, Christians learning from Hinduism, Hindus from Christianity, both of these from Islam and the other faiths which also are enriched from them. But if the other is the truth, if the advent of Christ to the world and what God wrought in Him are decisive and all-encompassing, then syncretism offers nothing. There is no reciprocity at the place where Christianity manifests Christ Crucified and Risen; no synthesis of the Cross and Resurrection with something else—no extension of them —to make them complete or enhance their efficacy. Christians can work with non-Christians of all types, in service enterprises in community living, for peace and social betterment, for common equity in international affairs.

But if Christianity is God's call and sovereign visitation for man's return to Himself, if in this call to return to Him God has embraced all peoples, then Christians must so testify in no faltering strain. That Christianity is for the world does not hang upon the text, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel", but on the actual content of Christianity, the intrinsic nature of Christ's Person and Work as affecting all men and absolutely valid. Nor need it nurture pride, as Toynbee fears, for Christians to claim primacy for their faith, if there the truth lies; but rather humility in having such truth to declare, which yet is not of oneself. So we welcome the sign of better relations among the world's religions, in place of rivalry and animosity; yet it can make indirection and confusion the greater if Christians meet this sign with something less than Christianity's full meaning or than the sure knowledge of how far for them its ancient imperative still stands.

THEOLOGICAL SCHOLARSHIP

AS our first editorial on "The Purpose of the Journal" indicated, this periodical is not a journal of scholarly research, even though some of its contents may well illuminate the problems of various fields of technical scholarship. Its aim—in some respects more modest, in others more daring—is to discuss those issues of Christian faith and practice which bear directly on the life of the Church and on the thinking and action of the Christian believer, and to do this against the background of the past history and the present circumstances of the Christian communions of Canada. It is, in other words, essentially a journal of *theology*, devoted to the expression of Christian truth and to the clarification of the way of life which that truth involves. It is intended to help both priests and ministers and laymen to a deeper understanding of their faith and of their responsibility as believers in the very diverse circumstances of their lives, rather than to promote theological scholarship in the strict sense.

At the same time, we intend no divorce between theology and scholarship. While elaborate technical discussions and scholarly apparatus will not be found in our columns, we are prepared to publish only material which, in the judgment of expert readers, has solid scholarly foundations. This standard is required by the very nature of theology, which rests on a primary revelation and lives amidst a developing tradition, both of which must be interpreted in the light of the most precise methods of historical research.

As editors of a theological journal, therefore, we must be vitally concerned with the status of theological scholarship in Canada. It is fair to say summarily that in the past theological scholarship has played a small role in the life of Canadian churches. For practical reasons, which were fully discussed in our first number, Canada provides few opportunities for intensive scholarly work. Only two centres—Toronto and Montreal—can begin to offer the essential facilities for advanced study in most theological disciplines, whether one is looking for substantial libraries or for teaching staffs with

diversified training and at least some leisure for research. Furthermore, our theological schools do not have the resources from which to provide adequate scholarship funds, fellowships or tutorial appointments, for the support of graduate study. Thus many of our parochial clergy are deprived of the extra intellectual stimulus that would be of the greatest value to them in their ministry, while enough adequately trained Canadians simply cannot be found to fill responsible teaching posts in our colleges. Valuable as the interchange of men and ideas is, and great as the contribution of teachers from across the Atlantic has been, it is scandalous that Canada has for so long been content simply to receive, without playing its own part in the preparation of scholars for the Church.

It may, of course, be said—and truly—that the fine scholar is not necessarily a good teacher, but it is wishful thinking and bad logic to conclude from this that the poor scholar will be a good teacher. Whatever else is required of those who are to make their special contribution to the Church in the area of theological teaching and leadership, there is no substitute for scholarly discipline in their preparation. If, however, the churches of Canada are to be adequately supplied with scholars, they and the institutions of learning which serve them must face a twofold challenge.

In the first place, our seminaries need not only more funds for library and faculty, but also more systematic use of their existing facilities. For example, at our largest English-speaking centre, the nucleus at least of a graduate school exists, in the Toronto Graduate School of Theological Studies, while the various college libraries, added to those of the University of Toronto and of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, provide adequate material for the most advanced students in several fields. A fuller graduate program, however, approaching the standard of the finest institutions of this continent, still needs to be worked out, and a closer integration of libraries is essential, if scholarly periodicals are to be made available for research students and duplications of expensive purchases are to be avoided. We need, that is, to be sure that our existing equipment at various centres across the country is as good and as effectively used as possible.

Secondly, young potential scholars must be assisted to undertake advanced studies in Canada and elsewhere. Provision should be made at each theological college for scholarships for study and travel outside Canada, and at least at the more important centres for tutorial posts in which promising young Canadians and others may gain teaching experience, pursue their own studies, and contribute to the thinking of their senior colleagues as well as of their pupils.

All this may seem visionary in the extreme—not to say extravagant. And yet, if Canadian churches are to be sound in themselves, and to make their due contribution to Christendom as a whole, one essential condition is the raising of our scholarly standards. Without sound scholarship the whole structure of our teaching and preaching is built on sand.

Vanity of Vanities

W. E. STAPLES

THE Book of Ecclesiastes, one of the shorter books of the Old Testament, has had, from a very early date, a profound influence upon English Literature. It has been asserted that no book in the Bible has been quoted so frequently. It has been all things to all people. The cynic, the materialist, the hedonist, and the evangelist, each has attributed to this Book his own concept of the meaning of life.[1]

A ballad by W. E. Henley may be said to illustrate the impact of Ecclesiastes upon the cynic:

> Life is a smoke that curls—
> Curls in a flickering skein
> That winds, and whisks and whirls,
> A figment thin and vain,
> Into the great Inane.
> One end for hut and hall!
> One end for cell and stall!
> Burned in one common flame
> Are wisdoms and insanities.
> For this alone we came:
> O Vanity of Vanities.[2]

The materialist seizes upon the concept of the fate common to man and beast. Both come from the dust, and to the dust they both return. It is a sort of Epicurean re-shuffling of the atoms.[3]

The hedonist expatiates on our author's excursions into the joys of this life. He greedily seizes upon the concept of the enjoyment of gardens, orchards, parks, irrigation works, male and female servants, cattle and sheep, silver, gold, singing men and women, as the central theme of his argument; and he receives some corroboration for his views in 1 Corinthians 15: 32[4], "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die", which is, perhaps, a mis-interpretation of Ecclesiastes, 8: 15, "And so I praised contentment, for man has no good under the sun but to eat and drink and be content"; to which may be added Ecclesiastes 9: 10, "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do with thy might, for there is no accomplishment, or reckoning, or knowledge, or wisdom in Sheol, whither thou art about to go". A somewhat similar idea may be found in these well-known lines:

> A book of verses underneath the bough,
> A jug of wine, a loaf of bread, and thou
> Beside me singing in the wilderness—
> O wilderness were Paradise enow.[5]

Because of this similarity of concept, Ecclesiastes has been called the Omar Khayyam of the Old Testament.

The evangelist, his eye intent upon the two birds in the bush, is inclined

to deprecate the one bird in hand, and interprets "Vanity of Vanities" in this light. To him this world is transient and futile, while the life to come is eternal and infinitely worth-while.[6]

Koheleth, which the Greeks translated "Ecclesiastes", wrote about the middle of the Third Century B.C.,[7] well after the influx of Greek culture into Western Asia. It is quite possible that he was more or less familiar with such authors as Theognis, Hesiod,[8] Aristophanes,[9] Zeno,[10] and Epicurus.[11] Phrases and idioms appearing in the writings of these men seem to find a place in Ecclesiastes. Whether our author used these phrases consciously or unconsciously it is impossible to say. At any rate, he used them strictly for his own purposes, and with his own meanings—as has been done by writers down through the ages.

Koheleth seems to reflect certain misgivings as to the merit of philosophy, a feeling which may be deduced from his repeated intimations that "many words mystify, rather than clarify" (5: 2, 6; 10: 14). In spite of this, however, the Book of Koheleth, of all the Books of the Old Testament, is the closest in content to a philosophical treatise. Yet, although one might expect such a treatise to outline a systematic progression of thought, Ecclesiastes does so as little as do the Prophets, Job or Proverbs. Indeed, it might be described as a series of "Guesses at the Truth".[12] Being a Semite, and so fundamentally a Theist to whom God reveals Himself, Ecclesiastes has no place for the Socratic type of argument. To him when God speaks, man must not question. Thus Koheleth, in common with the other Books of the Old Testament, offers no systematic study of Theology: the student must assemble his data from isolated passages, and arrange this data in an order in keeping with his own sense of logical sequence.

We must remember always that Koheleth was a Semite of the Third Century B.C.; that his language was Hebrew, a tongue in which many individual words have no absolute equivalent in English. Because of this, misconceptions have arisen. The fault is not that of the original manuscript, nor is it the fault of the translator, since he had, perforce, to use the vocabulary at his disposal. The difficulty is, that the reader takes the words of the translator, and endows them with concepts of the Western World of the Twentieth Century, instead of the Semitic World of the Third Century B.C.[13]

We must always recognize that we are the heirs of Greece and Rome in the Philosophical and Legalistic point of view, the central theme of which is Man. But our religious literature has come to us from the Semitic world, in which the central theme is not Man, but God. So there is within us a continuous clash between the humanism of our Greek and Roman teachers, and the Theism of our Semitic missionaries; and it is not always easy for the lion and the lamb to live comfortably together—unless the lamb be in the stomach of the lion. In this case the lion, at least, is content.

"Vanity of Vanities" is a most euphonious expression, and for aesthetic reasons, perhaps, it should be retained. The Hebrew word "*hebhel*"[14] was

used by earlier writers in connection with the mystery cults, and should be equated with our word Mystery or Incomprehensibility, rather than with the word Vanity, although it may be remarked in passing, that man has been always prone to equate what he does not know, or does not understand, with the futile or the vain.

Our English translation, "Vanity of Vanities", seems rather incongruous in other respects. Rarely does a preacher declaim in this fashion. Scholars have translated the Hebrew *koheleth* by such varied terms as, Assembler, Compiler, Collector, Debater, Just Orator, The Ideal Teacher, The Member of an Assembly (Ecclesiastes), Penitent, Philosopher, Preacher, Sage, Sophist, Teacher.[15] None of these is fully satisfactory: a better translation would be "One who Meditates". This concept is derivative of a Syriac word of the same root as *koheleth, "kahal"*, which means "to consider".[16] This translation fits in very well with the idea in 12: 9, "He weighed, and searched out, and arranges many proverbs". Dr. DeWitt has shown how St. Paul reacted to Epicurus, being repelled by certain of his ideas, and attracted by others.[17] Koheleth may very well have reacted in the same way, although the very name "Epicurus" must have been anathema to him as a pious Jew.[18] St. Paul seems to have been attracted by the phrase, "Meditate upon these things", a phrase which Epicurus used in a letter to one of his Disciples.[19] "Meditate" seems to mean "to calculate the pros and cons of any activity". This concept is certainly inherent in the argument of Koheleth and may well have an Epicurean origin. Thus "One who meditates" would seem to be a happier translation of *koheleth* than the familiar "Preacher".

I have noted before, that our author was a pious Jew who believed that God created the world and all that is in it. It would be incredible that Koheleth could think any creation of God futile, mere nothingness. On the other hand, it would be quite natural, and in keeping with his tradition, that he should acknowledge himself unable to understand the world in which he found himself. We may now re-translate our text—Mystery of Mysteries, says one who meditates, all is Mystery.

Koheleth repeatedly advises his reader "to fear God". The significance of this phrase is of prime importance. I need only note the oft-quoted passage, "The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs, 9: 10), which is repeated with variations in the Psalms (111: 10), Job (28: 28), and Isaiah (11: 2; 33: 6). They affirm that God is the Creator and Director of all: everything in the world is God's private property, to do with as He sees fit. These passages imply also, that man should recognize God as his Creator and Owner. It is an assertion of unquestioning trust in God. This is reflected in the Semitic-Moslem *uslim*, "I submit", and in the Semitic-Christian "Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done". Koheleth would say, "I find the world in which I live, and the ways of God with Man, quite inexplicable. But I am confident that God knows what He is doing, and that He has a plan for His world". I do not believe, as Professor Jastrow has suggested, that Koheleth was even a gentle cynic.[20]

The primary motive behind Old Testament literature is the glory of God, and not the portrayal of Israel's religious and political progress. That the Hebrews believed God to be a God of History (that is, One who directed all human activity in accordance with His plan for the world), is almost universally accepted. But it has impinged upon the minds of very few, that such a concept is often at variance with far-reaching moral and ethical standards among men.

Two passages may be cited to illustrate the Hebrew concept of Divine Government, in contrast with human ethical standards. According to Genesis 42: 21ff., the brothers of Joseph admit that they have sinned against him, clearly indicating their feeling of responsibility for their actions. Genesis 45: 5ff., gives the other side of this picture. In speaking to his brothers, Joseph says, "Now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves that you sold me here, for it was not you, but God, who sent me here". Chapter 50 gives another version of this same story; the brothers fear that Joseph may wreak vengeance upon them for their treatment of him, so they send a messenger to Joseph, confessing their sin, and asking pardon. Verses 19ff. note Joseph's reply: "Fear not, am I in the place of God? While ye did devise evil against me, God devised it for good, in order to keep much people alive, as is the case to-day." Joseph's view is that the past of his brothers, as well as their future, is in the hands of God, and that their treatment of him was all part of the Divine plan, all their actions were directed by God to this end.

In Isaiah 10: 5-34, we have the story of an Assyrian invasion. The Assyrians considered that their invasion of Israel was undertaken on their own initiative, and by their own might. In reality, however, the Assyrians were acting only as agents of Yahweh, who had incited them to invade Israel for His own purposes. It seems evident that, while man feels himself to be a free agent, and behaves as such, in reality he is not free—it is God who is directing man towards the fulfilment of God's own purpose. It was the failure to recognize that these two views might be held by one author, that has led some scholars to assume a multiplicity of authorship for the Book of Ecclesiastes.[21]

One of the Hebrew words whose translation has created considerable misunderstanding is the word *"ruach"*, which is almost always translated "spirit". The English reader immediately clothes this word "spirit" with all its modern Anglo-Saxon grandeur and significance. To understand the full meaning of *"ruach"*, we must trace its history from earliest times.[22]

Roughly speaking, the course of Hebrew development passed through four major phases: the Patriarchal, the Period of the Judges, the Prophetic (allied with the Period of the Monarchy), and the Post-Exilic Period. During the first phase, the Patriarchal, society was tribal, being composed of a unit of people with a leader. The second phase, the Period of the Judges, was tribal also, but more sedentary in character; the third phase, the Prophetic, was national, being composed of a larger unit than the tribal, with a King

as leader; the last phase, the Post-Exilic Period, was largely a society of individuals.

During the first phase God ordered affairs by speaking directly to the leader, it being understood that his followers would follow him. In the second phase, that of the Judges, whenever God had a special task for a leader, He granted that leader a special *ruach* which enabled him to carry out the task God had given him to do. It is true that each man and beast was endowed at birth with a *ruach* which remained with him until death, but in the Period of the Judges it was understood that a special task required more *ruach* than ordinary: Judges 6: 34, "The *ruach* of Yahweh clothed Gideon"; Judges 11: 29, "The *ruach* of Yahweh was upon Jephthah". In Judges 9: 23, when Yahweh wished to stir up trouble between two peoples, He sent an evil *ruach* between them. The *ruach* was, in every case, the agent of Yahweh. In the third phase, the Prophetic, God made His will known to the King through a prophet whom He had selected as His mediator, it being understood that as the King went, so went the nation. In the fourth phase, the Post-Exilic, God directed each person individually, as society was no longer a unit, and since the old concept of King and prophet had receded. In this period of Hebrew development, when the concept of the importance of the individual as over against the older concept of the social group became prominent, the idea of the *ruach* as a divine agent directing the affairs of the individual came to the fore. Each individual had from God a *ruach* which entered the foetus before birth, and which returned to God at death. This *ruach,* the activating force in man, caused him to act strictly in accordance with the divine plan, the *ruach* being always a divine agent.

Up to the time of the Revised Version, translators interpreted the Hebrew *"re'uth"* or *"ra'yon ruach"*[23] as *"vexation of spirit"*. At that time they noted its proximity to *"hebhel",* vanity, and, recalling the theory of Parallelism, translated it as "a striving after wind". Parallelism, however, does not always involve a strict synonym sequence—sometimes it involves contrasts, sometimes progression. I would understand the phrase *"ra'yon ruach"* to mean not a "striving after wind" but rather "the striving of the *ruach*". This translation, it seems to me, is much more in keeping with the Hebrew idiom, and also more in keeping with the spirit of the Book itself. Our author notes repeatedly how irrational is life from man's point of view, yet man cannot stop striving, since his *ruach* continually urges him on—a primitive concept somewhat analogous to our "divine discontent".

This *ruach* is above reason. Epicurus considered Nature as the Creator and Director of the Universe. He explained the frequent irrationality of human activity by the theory that Nature is above reason. The analogy between the "nature" theory of Epicurus and the *"ruach"* of Ecclesiastes, is striking.[24] If Koheleth were familiar with the writings of Epicurus, the resemblance may not be entirely coincidental. There is of course a profound difference in the points of view of these two men. To Koheleth, God is the sole Creator and Director of the Universe; He is the Creator of the *ruach,* and the One

who appoints to each individual his task on earth. To Epicurus, on the other hand, Nature is the Creator and Director not of man only, but of the gods as well. While Koheleth is a strict Theist, Epicurus is a Humanist, but evidently a Humanist with Nature at the helm.

The insignificance of Man's knowledge and power, in contrast with the power and knowledge of God, is ever present in the minds of Hebrew writers: Job 11: 7,

> Can you discover the very nature of God?
> Can you discover even unto the limits of the Almighty?
> It is higher than Heaven, What can you do?
> It is deeper than Sheol, What can you know?

and again, Job 38: 3,

> Gird up like a man your loins, that I may question you,
> And do you tell me!
> Where were you when I founded the Earth?
> Tell, if you are acquainted with understanding!
> Who established its measurements? Surely you know!
> Or who stretched a line upon it?

Koheleth was quite in agreement with these sentiments, when he said, in 5: 21,

> Do not set rashness in your mouth,
> Let not your heart speak a word hastily before God,
> For God is in His Heavens, and you are upon the earth,
> Therefore, let your words be few!

Surely a man who held God in such reverence could hardly have considered that any of God's creations were vain, transitory or futile. He might however, say in all honesty and reverence, that he was unable to understand things as he found them in the world: mystery of mysteries, says one who meditates, mystery of mysteries, all is a mystery which I cannot understand.

"Man has no profit[25] in return for the toil at which he toils under the sun." This passage may be considered as the sub-title of Koheleth's dissertation, and to him a basic reason for the incomprehensibility of the purpose of life. The following lines would seem to point to an explanation of this thesis: "A generation comes, and a generation goés, while the earth remains for an age. The sun rises, and the sun sets, and goes panting unto the place where it rises. Going to the south, rounding unto the north, around and around goes the wind, and returns upon its course. All streams go to the sea, without the sea becoming full; unto the place whither all streams go, they continue to go. Everything grows weary without one of them being able to speak, the eye seeing little and the ear hearing little."

These lines would seem to indicate that succeeding generations of man, the constant courses of the sun, wind and rivers, make up the Order of God's Creation. Each generation of man is very brief, thus limiting the extent of his experience, and hence of his wisdom. However, other creatures

of God, His sun, His wind, His rivers, have been doing their allotted tasks since the beginning of the age, yet they have added to Creation not one iota, and so have done their work with no profit to show for all their toil. Man then, who is also a creature of God, but whose life, is so brief in comparison with these other creatures of God, may expect to do only the work God has allotted to him, and he can (or should) expect a profit infinitely less than can the sun, the wind, and the rivers. Like the other phenomena, whatever man does, he is acting only as the agent of God, and his accomplishments, therefore, must be attributed to God, and not to man himself. Furthermore, these other creatures of God, sun, wind and rivers, cannot tell man of their experiences, which have extended from the beginning of the age, so man must continue to be mystified as to the purpose of life. He can be certain of one thing only—that profit is not a part of this purpose.

The early Sumerian, Babylonian and Hebrew creation and flood myths would seem to show that the Semites held a theory of a cyclic order of the Universe. The fertility and mystery cults, native to the same areas, seem to confirm this point of view. Such a concept entailed a series of ages, beginning with a Creation, continuing with a Golden Age, and then a gradual decline, a catastrophic Destruction, the salvation of a few, and a New Age, which would presumably follow the pattern of the preceding ages.[26] Koheleth seems to have this in mind when he says, 1: 9ff.,

> That which was, is that which shall be.
> That which has been created, is that which will be created, there being nothing new under the sun.
> Should there be a thing of which one may say,
> "Look at this! It is new!" Already it has belonged to the Ages before us.
> The former ones have no memorial, and the later ones, who shall be,
> Shall have no memorial with those who follow.

3: 13, may be considered as supplementary to this concept:

> I am confident that whatever God creates will be for an age,
> One cannot add to it, nor subtract from it,
> God having already made that before which men stand in awe.
> Whatever was, already is, and that which is to be, already was,
> Since God seeks out that which has gone before.

We must, therefore, envisage an ordered Universe, moving according to the Divine plan, from Creation to Destruction. In such a Universe, every creature must play his allotted part in his allotted time, since any deviation would be disastrous to the plan. "One cannot add to it, nor subtract from it."

I have noted elsewhere that the directing force in man, as well as in beast, is the divine *ruach,* the activating principle, which is allotted to each before birth. The idea of this constant and precise control of the individual is not confined to Koheleth alone. Amos 4: 13, "For behold, He Who has

formed the mountains and created the *ruach,* and told man what is his thought, Yahweh is His name". This is valid even for pleasant illusions which are inspired by God. 2: 24, "That one should eat and drink and *make himself see a profit* in his toil, is not in reality a profit, for this too is from the hand of God, for none can eat or drink apart from Him". He might well have included the thinking that he has obtained a profit from his toil as a gift of God.

Whatever a man has is a gift from God. There is no idea of merit involved. Evidently God gives certain individuals desirable things, and gives others undesirable things, not because one man is better or more deserving than another, but simply to carry out His divine plan. In his ignorance, man calls one who has received desirable things "He who is good before God", and the other, who has been the recipient of undesirable things, man calls "a sinner".[27] In reality, each has performed his allotted task. 2: 26, "To the man who is good before Him, God has given wisdom and knowledge and contentment, and to the sinner He has given the task of gathering and amassing, in order to give it to the one who is good before God". This sort of favouritism is incomprehensible to man, yet his *ruach* drives him on to do his appointed task. 5: 18 repeats this concept, as it has to do with the more fortunate: "As for every man to whom God has given wealth and possessions, and granted him the ability to enjoy them, and to take up his portion, that is, to be content in his toil—this is the gift of God." 6: 1 reflects the other side of the picture: "There is an evil which I have noted under the sun, which is very frequent to man. A man, to whom God is wont to give wealth and possessions and honour without any limit, and God does not permit him to enjoy it. This is incomprehensible, and an evil sickness."[28] I do not need to point out that it is the misfortunes that come to man that are incomprehensible to him. Man has been content always to accept the good things of life as his due. Koheleth, however, would hasten to deny that man has earned anything. Whatever he has is his only by the grace of God, and not because he has deserved or earned it. Merit has no place in our author's concept of the order of the Universe. Koheleth's idea of pleasure is pertinent to this concept of God's gifts to man. "Pleasure" is such an easy word to interpret! It becomes all things to all men. In Chapter 2, in his search for the meaning of life, Koheleth turns to the possibility of pleasure. "Of laughter, I said, it is madness, and of pleasure, it is useless." This pleasure to which he refers, is, of course, the lighthearted kind, connected with laughter. For this type our author has little use. The second type has to do with vast possessions. Koheleth continues:

> I amassed more than all who were before me in Jerusalem,
> My wisdom serving me well.
> All that my eyes asked for, I did not withhold from them.
> I did not restrain my heart from any pleasure.

This type of pleasure, accepted simply as gifts from God, was in no way a

result of his own endeavours. In the following lines Koheleth defines his own concept of pleasure:

> Indeed, my heart found pleasure from all my toil,
> And this was my portion, out of all my toil.

We may conclude, therefore, that to Koheleth "pleasure" meant that peculiar consciousness of contentment which comes from hard work, a contentment not in any way connected with possessions, except in so far as their accumulation has involved toil. This concept of pleasure is not greatly at variance with that of Epicurus. To sum up: Koheleth believes that possessions come from God, that toil is the lot of man, and is the sole source of his contentment.

In a very special sense, God was to Koheleth no respecter of persons. All alike were God's creatures, and to each He assigned a task. The task of one may be more pleasant than the task of another, but each has his place in the divine plan. Obviously creatures of God included those whom man in his ignorance had labelled wise men, fools, righteous, wicked, saints, sinners and madmen. The fact that all these fared alike added to the incomprehensibility of the ways of God to man. 9: 2, "Everyone will fare the same: the righteous and the wicked, the good and the evil; the clean and the unclean; the one who offers a sacrifice and the one who does not offer a sacrifice, will have one fate. The sinner is like the good man, and he who swears is like the one who fears an oath. This is an evil in all that is created under the sun, for all have one fate." ("Evil" here simply implies what is incomprehensible to man.)

7: 14 is pertinent to this denial of rewards and punishments. "Note the work of God! Who can straighten what He has made crooked? On a day of good fortune, enjoy it; and in a day of evil fortune, note. The latter, like the former, God has made, as a result of which, man cannot discover what is coming next." Good does not derive from good, nor evil from evil—God apportions good or evil in His own time, and for His own purposes.

The authors of Genesis concluded that, although God had created man in His own image, and although He had endowed man with His own breath and *ruach,* man had eventually gone wrong, and so had to be destroyed. The prophets also, were quite certain that man was heading in the wrong direction. Koheleth's thesis, that God had a plan, even though it was hidden from man, and that man acted always in accordance with this divine plan, would seem to show that our author doubted the belief of these earlier writers that man had gone wrong. Koheleth thought that man had gone in the way God intended him to go, a way necessary to the working out of His plan.[29]

7: 29, "However, God made man upright and, as a result they sought many reckonings." 7: 27 defines "reckonings" as adding one and one together. It must be understood that "reckoning" is the natural result of having been made upright. In other words, God made man as He intended

him to be, and man behaved as God intended him to behave. Man was intended, therefore, to toil without any appreciation of God's purposes.

God, the Creator and Director of the Universe, owns all peoples, and He grants to each His gifts, but not according to man's sense of merit. The greatest gift God can give, is not to be born, and so not to suffer. The second greatest gift is, having been born, to die. 7: 1, "To be born is better than fine oil; and the day of man's death is better than the day of his birth; for death means that he has accomplished the task God gave him to do; his sufferings are over. I congratulate the dead who are already dead, more than the living, who are yet alive. But better than either of these is he who has never been, who has never seen the evil works created under the sun." (Evil is, of course, simply the unpleasant, and so the incomprehensible thing.)

Koheleth believes that the feeling of accomplishment gained through toil is the only thing that makes life bearable. It had been traditional among the Hebrews, that long life and many children were the natural rewards of piety. Koheleth denies this. "If a man begat a hundred children, and lived many years without enjoying any good—that is, without feeling that his toil had accomplished something (one of the gifts of God)—I state that the still-born child is better than he, for into an incomprehensible world he comes, and into darkness he goes, and his name is covered with darkness. Yea, he who has never seen the sun has more peace than he."

But, having been born, Koheleth advises man to make the most of it. Toil is the real boon of humanity, and man should bear his own cross with a cheerful disposition. 9: 8,

> Always let your garments be white, and let not oil be lacking on your head.
> Enjoy life with the woman you love, during all your incomprehensible life, which He has allotted to you under the sun,
> For that is your portion in return for life, and for the toil at which you toil under the sun,
> Whatever your hands find to do, do with all your strength,
> For there is no accomplishment, or reckoning, or knowledge, or wisdom in Sheol, whither you are going.

It may be noted in passing that the evangelist uses only those parts of our author that he can interpret for his own purposes, and neglects what would modify his interpretations.

There is a proper time in which the various activities of life must be carried out (Chap. 3): a time to be born, a time to die, a time to plant, a time to root up what has been planted, a time to slay and a time to heal, a time to break down, and a time to build up, etc. From none of these activities does man derive any profit, for God has given man an unprofitable occupation with which to be occupied, but everything God has made fitting in its time (3: 11). With these verses we might place 10: 7, "go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a good heart, for already God has

accepted your works". The accomplishments of man are simply the accomplishments of God through His agent, whom God has made upright.

According to Genesis 1 man was created in God's image as His vicegerent on earth, with control over all things upon the earth. Man, therefore, was superior to the beasts. Koheleth, on the other hand, denies that man is in any way superior to animals, or that man has any property rights over them. He says that beasts are creatures of God, just as man is a creature of God. Koheleth's idea is more in keeping with Genesis 2. Ecclesiastes 3: 18, "I considered concerning the matter of mankind, in regard to God having set them apart, and in regard to their thinking that the beasts belong to man: surely, as regards the fate of mankind, and the fate of the beasts, they have one fate. The death of one is the same as the death of the other; both have one *ruach;* there is no advantage for man over the beast. This is incomprehensible. Both go to one place, both come from the dust, both return to the dust. Who knows whether the *ruach* of man goes up and the *ruach* of the beast goes down to the earth?" Scholars have concluded from these verses that Koheleth was a Sadducee, who believed that there was no life after death; or that he had an Epicurean concept that explained life and death as variations in the grouping of the atoms. It will be noted that our author does not deny a future life. He says only that no one knows about it. However, from Ecclesiastes 11: 5 we learn that the *ruach* is deposited in the bones of the foetus before birth; from 8: 8, that man has no power over the *ruach* during his life; and from 12: 12, that the *ruach* returns at death to God, who gave it. This concept is not that of the world-soul of the Greeks, for the *ruach* of the Hebrews, although an agent of God, seems to have an individuality of its own. It seems to me that in Koheleth we have a glimmering of the concept of immortality.

An important portion of the Book of Koheleth portrays a conflict between the concept of the order of the Universe as man thinks it should be, and the order of the Universe as God intended it to be, and so, as it is.

In Koheleth's mind, a wise man should be better off than a fool. In actuality, he says, this is not so. 2: 13

> I thought that wisdom should have a profit over folly, like the profit of light over darkness; the wise man's eyes being in his head, while the fool walks in darkness. But I, myself, am convinced that one fate befalls both. I said, if the fate of the fool befall me, why do I behave with wisdom, there being no profit. So I concluded that this was past understanding. Surely, neither the wise man, nor the fool, has a memorial for the age, because in the days to come, all will be forgotten. How then does the wise man die? Exactly like the fool!

It had been traditional for the Hebrews to believe that righteousness was rewarded, and wickedness punished. This was quite in accord with Koheleth's idea of a proper order of the Universe. In his experience he had discovered that such was not the case. 7: 15ff.,

> I considered everything during my incomprehensible days. There may be a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness; and there may be a wicked man who prolongs his days in evil.
> Be not excessively righteous, and be not more than ordinarily wise.
> Why should you be astonied?
> Be not excessively wicked, and be not a fool; why should you die before your time. [These are rhetorical negatives.]
> It is proper that you cleave to one, and not let go of the other, for one who fears God may evolve from either of them.

That this concept disturbed Koheleth greatly is indicated by the repetition of this experience in 8: 14:

> What has been done upon the earth is incomprehensible, for there are righteous men unto whom befalls what should befall the wicked,
> And there are wicked men unto whom befalls what should befall the righteous:
> I concluded that this was incomprehensible.

and 8: 12,

> The sinner may do evil a hundred times and prolong his life,
> Yet I am certain, that which is profitable to those who fear God, is that they fear Him.
> And that which is not profitable to the wicked who does not prolong his days like a shadow, is that he does not fear God.

From these rather obscure passages, which must fit into the pattern of our author, we may deduce that it is a good thing to fear God, that is, to recognize oneself as His personal property, not because of advantage to be gained by doing so, but simply because it is seemly so to do. This concept seems to underlie the tenor of our Book, and indicates the beginning of an ideal ethic—the doing of right for the sake of doing right, without reference to rewards or punishments.

To return to the problem of righteousness and wickedness: Koheleth notes their presence in a quite irrational sequence, and shows that the difficulty lies really in his own ignorance. 3: 16,

> Again I noted under the sun,
> Where there was right order, there was wickedness,
> Where there was righteousness, there was wickedness, I concluded,
> The righteous and the wicked, God will put in their proper order,
> For a time for every matter and for every work He has appointed.

Everything which we call wickedness, or right order, has its own proper time, just as birth and death have their own proper time. And, as our author says in 3: 11, "He has made everything seemly in its own time. And so there is a time for wickedness, and a time for righteousness." But

the world is not run by man; and so things do not happen in accordance with man's sense of fitness. 9: 11,

> The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor wealth to the understanding,
> Nor grace to those who know, for a proper time and chance befall all.

Merit is a human concept. The slow, the weak, the foolish and the ignorant are also God's creatures, and are often granted by God the gifts which man would give to the swift, the strong and the wise. God creates the evil, as well as the good, and no man knows what is coming next, because human concepts of cause and effect are in reality invalid.

> Indeed, man knows not his time,
> Like a fish caught in an evil net,
> Like birds taken in a gin,
> Like these, man is ensnared at an evil time,
> When it falls upon him suddenly.

To Koheleth, injustice seems to be rampant in the world. 9: 13,

> This I noted under the sun, and it was important to me,
> There was a small city, with few inhabitants
> Against which came a great King,
> And surrounded it, and built against it great siege works.
> And there was a poor wise man
> Who delivered the city by his wisdom—
> But no one remembered that poor wise man.

Even in Koheleth's day, it would seem "the paths of glory lead but to the grave"—to oblivion. 10: 5,

> There is an evil I have noted under the sun, an error emanating from the Ruler,
> Folly is placed in many high places,
> While wealthy dwell in low places,
> I have noted slaves upon horses,
> And princes walking like slaves upon the earth.

This sequence of past events, which Koheleth found so incomprehensible, and the uncertainty which he felt in regard to the future, should not, he thinks, deter man from living industriously and courageously. Our author preaches a gospel of toil, and advises man to live dangerously, to take chances, simply because he cannot know what the future may have in store for him. 11: 1,

> Cast your bread upon the waters, for you may find it in many seas.
> Divide your estate into seven or eight parts, for you do not know what misfortune may be upon the earth.
> He that watches the wind will not sow, and he that watches the clouds will not reap.

> Just as you do not know the way of the *ruach* in the bones of a pregnant woman, so you do not know the work of God, who doeth all things.
> In the morning sow your seed, and at evening do not let your hand rest, for you do not know whether the one or the other will prosper, or whether both alike will be good.

Koheleth says that from the divine point of view, all is pre-determined and cannot be altered by man; but from the human point of view, the future is unknown, and man should be active and venturesome in his investments.

Man, an agent of God, was created to carry out God's purposes. This certainly entails toil, misery and often a sense of frustration. Man therefore, becomes synonymous with the oppressed ones, while God is the Oppressor. 4: 1,

> I again noted all the oppressed ones who had been created under the sun, and lo, there were the tears of the oppressed ones without any comforter, and from the hand of the oppressor came power without their having any comforter, and so I congratulated the dead who were already dead, more than the living (the oppressed ones) who were yet alive.

With this passage we may compare 5: 7, "If you see oppressions of the poor, and exploitation of right conduct in the provinces, do not be astonied because of the matter, for one official keeps watch over another official, and the most high over him." Thus, even what appears to be a crass miscarriage of justice becomes a part of the divine plan, since each official is acting as an agent of God. With a theological concept such as was held by Koheleth, there is no place for the anthropological attributes of God commonly expressed by the pious. There is no room for anger, or mercy, long-suffering or justice in Koheleth's theology, for God rules the world in accordance with a rigid, pre-determined plan, and all creatures in the world are subject to this plan.

In summing up the philosophy of Koheleth as shown by his writings, may I suggest that he seems to base his theology on these premises: Life is a gift of God, and it is closely allied with toil and disappointment. Man has no choice in the matter of being born: he has no control over the *ruach* that directs his activities, since that is directed by God. He has, moreover, no say in the timing of his death—his is a war in which there is no discharge. It is fitting for a man to make the best of his misfortune in being born, to show a cheerful countenance at all times, to put all his energy and skill in whatever task may be assigned to him by God, and to enjoy to the full the labour involved, for in labour alone does he find true contentment. 11: 9,

> Go in the ways of your heart,
> And in the seeing of your eyes,
> And know that concerning all these,
> God will bring you into the right order.

The final chapter of Ecclesiastes gives a vivid description of the last days of an old man, noting his failing powers—his teeth gone, his eyes dim, his voice flute-like, etc. Many of the phrases are uncertain in meaning. 12: 2,

> On the day when the keepers of the house tremble
> And the strong men are bent,
> And the grinding women cease, for they are few,
> And the women peeking out of the windows are darkened,
> And the doors in the street are closed,
> When the sound of the grinding is low,
> And the bird-like voice is dumb,
> And all the musical notes are low.
> Yea, they fear what is high!
> Terrors are in the way,
> The almond trees sparkle,
> And the locust goes humping along,
> And the caper berries fail,
> For man goeth to his eternal home,
> And the mourners go about in the street.
> Before the silver cord is broken,
> And the golden bowl is broken,
> And the vessel is shattered at the fountain,
> And the wheel at the well is broken,
> And the dust returns upon the earth, as it was,
> While the *ruach* returns to God, who gave it.

"Mystery of Mysteries," says one who meditates, "Mystery of Mysteries, all is a mystery which I cannot understand." Koheleth's speculations end with a final assertion of his faith in God, and in God's plan, a statement that may be strangely comforting to sinners such as we. It is a vision of God assembling the most unlikely bits and pieces of the world and of our activities into a complete and perfect whole. "Surely every work God will bring into its proper place, concerning all that is hidden, whether good or evil."

I began with Henley's reaction to the problems and speculations of Koheleth. I cannot do better than close with these words of Pope, which seem to echo Koheleth's philosophy:

> All nature is but art, unknown to thee,
> All chance, direction which thou canst not see,
> All discord, harmony, not understood,
> All partial evil, universal good,
> And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite
> One truth is clear, whatever is, is right.[80]

Notes

1. Cf. E. H. Plumptre, Century Bible, *Ecclesiastes*, pp. 7-10.
2. Quoted from G. C. Martin, Century Bible, *Proverbs etc.*, p. 221.
3. N. W. DeWitt, *Epicurus and his Philosophy*, pp. 16f. A. D. Power, *Ecclesiastes*, p. 30.
4. Although this verse is usually considered as a quotation from Isaiah 22:13, the similar passages in Ecclesiastes would mean: Since food and drink are gifts of God, and since contentment is closely allied to toil, and since death interrupts our work; let us

accept God's gifts, and work with the utmost diligence at the tasks God has assigned to us, for death will come soon.

5. Plumptre, *op. cit.*, p. 263; Power, *op. cit.*, p. 31. W. B. Forbush made a translation of Ecclesiastes in the metre of Omar Khayyam in 1906.

6. Possuet, *Oraisin Funèbres*, de Henriette-Anne d'Angleterre.

7. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 215; Power, *op. cit.*, p. 11. Robert Gordis, *Koheleth the Man and his World, pp.* 63ff.

8. H. Ranston, *Ecclesiastes and the Early Greek Wisdom Literature.*

9. Eccles. 1:7 is a paraphrase of Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 1. 1293.

10. A. H. McNeile, *Ecclesiastes*, pp. 44f.

11. DeWitt, *op. cit.*, p. 199. Plumptre, *op. cit.*, quotes several parallels to Ecclesiastes from Lucretius.

12. Hare, *Guesses at Truth*, 1827.

13. There seems to be a serious tendency for students to take it for granted that the various authors of the Old and New Testament were members of their own churches in good standing.

14. Staples, JNES II, pp. 95ff.

15. Power, *op. cit.*, pp. 4f.

16. Payne-Smith, *Syriac-English Dictionary*, p. 491.

17. DeWitt, *Saint Paul and Epicurus*, pp. 22f.

18. Sanhedrin X: 1.

19. DeWitt, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

20. Morris Jastrow Jr., *A Gentle Cynic, Being the Book of Ecclesiastes.*

21. Barton, ICC., *Ecclesiastes*, pp. 18ff.

22. Staples, AJSL XLIV, pp. 145f.

23. For a more complete argument for this rendering, see Staples, JNES II, pp. 96f.

24. DeWitt, *Epicurus and his Philosophy*, pp. 128 ff.

25. Staples, JNES IV, pp. 87ff.

26. Apocalypse and Prophecy would appear to be related to this concept.

27. Staples, JNES VI, pp. 65ff.

28. The persistence of this Semitic concept, in which one person is favored at the expense of another without any moral significance, may be noted in a brief poem in the *1001 Nights*, in the story of the fisherman:

> "Do you not see the sea with the fisherman diligent in pursuit
> Of his daily bread, while the stars of night are in tangled skein?
> He has waded into the centre of it while the waves buffet him,
> His eyes continue to follow the billowing of his net,
> Until he has spent the night. He is happy with the fish
> Whose gullet has been split with the spit of death.
> He who had spent the night free from cold,
> In the most desirable of conditions bought it.
> Praise be to the Lord who giveth to one and denieth the other.
> One catches the fish, while the other eats it."

29. There is always the possibility that Koheleth was not at variance with the prophets in this.

30. Pope, *Essay on Man*, I, 11, pp. 289ff.

Historical Theology and Biblical Theology

ALAN RICHARDSON

AT first sight it might seem that the distinction between historical theology and biblical theology is sufficiently obvious. That is to say, when we use these terms in conversation with our colleagues they seem to understand what we mean. Perhaps their general connotation in everyday usage is something like this. Historical theology is simply the application of those disciplines of historical science, which were perfected in the nineteenth century, to the study of biblical and Christian origins and developments. Biblical theology is the interpretation of the insights of the Bible in a coherent and systematic way with a view to shewing the essential meaning and unity of the biblical faith. According to this kind of working definition there need be no clash between these two types of theological enquiry; as in other spheres it must be pointed out that there is no essential conflict between science and religion. The scientist—in this case the historical theologian—must be allowed full freedom to pursue his researches wherever they may lead, and the conclusions to which he is to come must not be prescribed in advance by dogmatists who start from faith rather than from history. The biblical theologian, however, must pay attention to the conclusions which the historical study of the Bible has reached; otherwise he will be in danger of imposing an elaborate allegorism or typology on the historical materials, which bears no more relation to the latter than do the constructions of, say, Valentinus or the British Israelites.

Thus, it is generally conceded that the biblical theologian must take account of the researches of historical investigators and not try to by-pass their conclusions in the interests of his dogmatic system. Indeed, the biblical and dogmatic theologian is nowadays so anxious to create the impression of having started from the unadorned facts, as the historian sees them, that he often succeeds in convincing himself that he has started from those facts and based his conclusions solely upon them. It is not, however, so readily conceded that the man whose interest is in historical theology should or must take up an attitude in the sphere of biblical theology; it is still often assumed that the historical theologian may continue with his researches unaffected by discussions about the nature of revelation or the problem of demythologizing. A kind of peaceful co-existence is still frequently held to be the ideal relationship between historical and biblical theology; it is not inevitable that the one should attack or seek to subjugate the other, and if an iron curtain separates the two spheres of influence, at least it should prevent either side from trespassing too easily on its neighbour's territory.

Of course, we all recognize that this sketch of the two empires of historical and biblical theology is somewhat inaccurate and misleading. At best it

serves merely as a rough-and-ready characterization of what is on the top of our minds when we say that so-and-so is interested in historical theology and so-and-so in biblical theology. There are, it is true, theologians, if such they may be called, who would be bored by a discussion of the problem of demythologizing the Gospel but who would listen eagerly to a paper on the Semitisms in Lk. 1-2 or on the *hapax legomena* in Colossians-Ephesians. And there are also those who would be entirely uninterested in such enquiries unless they were assured that they had some vital bearing upon the doctrine of justification by faith or of the apostolic succession. Historical and biblical theologians, as we use such phrases, are, it is true, recognizable species amongst the theological fauna of this and other ages. Some University faculties or schools of theology can fairly be labelled by the one or the other of these terms, at least for purposes of broad and convenient description. Nevertheless the distinction between historical and biblical theology, when we come to consider it more searchingly, breaks down and is seen to be more apparent than real, and it is doubtful whether the terms have any more validity and utility than labels usually possess. One might label this jar "strawberry jam" and that one "raspberry", and the labels are useful enough for practical purposes; but the analytical chemist knows that a high percentage of the contents of both jars is in fact identical in substance.

Thus, when we begin to analyse the content of historical theology we find that it contains a remarkable percentage of the kind of presuppositions which are found in the writings of so-called biblical theologians—not perhaps the same presuppositions but still the same kind of presuppositions, that is to say, presuppositions which belong to the sphere of philosophy or ideology rather than to that of empirical science. In other words, as we all recognize nowadays, even the most empirically-minded historian works with his mind crammed full of philosophical and ideological assumptions, all the more so if he prides himself on being uninterested in speculative problems and concerned only with historical facts. If we might adapt some words which Professor A. D. Ritchie once wrote about physical scientists,[1] we might say that historians "brush aside a vast number of perplexing problems when they desire to disregard metaphysics and go straight to work" on history. Their conception of history is "already saturated with metaphysics and metaphysics of the most dangerous sort, unconscious metaphysics inherited from our forebears and worked out in extreme youth. Lurking in the background is some theory and some assumption as to the nature of things; the (historian's) escape from metaphysics is largely illusory. He has simply repressed it." What Ritchie calls "unconscious metaphysics" would better be termed ideology, for ideology differs from metaphysics or philosophy precisely in the fact that it is uncriticised and largely or entirely unconscious. The uncritical or unphilosophical person sees everything through the spectacles of his own assumptions, and he is unaware of the spectacles he is wearing; he thinks that he sees things as they are in themselves. As T. E.

Hulme pointed out, "there are certain doctrines which for a particular period seem not doctrines, but inevitable categories of the human mind." People "do not see them, but other things *through* them".[2]

Now, of course, it must be conceded that there are a number of literary and historical questions in the sphere of theological studies into which the personal beliefs of the investigator do not obtrude themselves at all. For example, it is possible to determine scientifically whether there are Semitisms in St. Luke's Gospel or how many *hapax legomena* there are in the Pastoral Epistles. But it is an error to conclude from this concession that therefore all questions of literary and historical criticism are equally susceptible of impartial or "scientific" treatment. Yet this is the assumption which is constantly made, more often unconsciously than deliberately. Let us take one or two illustrations of the way in which this assumption has pervaded recent theological study.

It has, for instance, been received almost as a dogma of modern biblical scholarship that the Book of Ecclesiastes represents a distinctly Greek type of pessimism and scepticism which is at variance with the Hebraic outlook of the Bible as a whole. The Preacher is accused of being variously a Cynic, an Epicurean, a Stoic, a worldly Sadducee or even a nihilist, and these assertions are copied from one commentary to another. It has been found necessary to invent a Pharisaic interpolator to account for the passages which do not accord with this estimate. But to-day in our changed climate of opinion it is easier to see that all these critical estimates and conclusions are based on the fact that the insights of the Preacher contradict the assumptions of theological liberal optimism. It is not Ecclesiastes but the liberal critics, with their sanguine confidence in human reason to understand all mysteries and all knowledge, who are the purveyors of non-biblical Greek attitudes. The Preacher is essentially a prophet for our age, and he is biblical through and through: he has stood before the abyss of nothingness and contemplated the vanity of all human pretensions, especially pride of knowledge. So he exhorts the young man to remember his Creator: think of your existence, its beginning and its inevitable ending. If you don't want to live in a fool's paradise, face the fact of your mortality; you are young now and full of life, but face the fact that one day you will die. Take delight in the good things of life while you can, but don't put your trust in them; put away evil from your flesh, for youth and the prime of life are vanity. The days will come when you will no longer find satisfaction in these things. When the evil days come, when the keepers of the house tremble and the strong men bow down, then the theories and the philosophies of other people, all the wisdom of the books and the labs., will be but a weariness of the flesh, a vexation of the spirit. The only knowledge which will help you then will be your own knowledge of God, built up in a lifetime of remembering him, of obeying his will, of keeping his commandments and thus fulfilling the whole duty of man. You know God, not by reading books about him or speculating on his existence and attributes, but by

obeying him, fearing him and worshipping him. One is tempted to ask whether there is any book in the Old Testament more thoroughly biblical than Ecclesiastes and whether anything could better illustrate the subjectivism of the so-called "historical" approach than the treatment which it has received at the hands of the commentators since the rise of the modern critical method.

One further illustration of the inadequacy of the so-called "historical" approach must suffice. Let us consider Rudolf Bultmann's *Theology of the New Testament*. In this work the great Marburg scholar gives us the mature results of a lifetime's researches. The assumption of the whole work is that by the methods of scientific historical criticism it is possible to lay bare the successive stages by which the Catholic religion of the second and subsequent centuries was developed. This assumption is nowhere criticized; it is not even stated; it is taken as self-obvious. The result is a subjective and uncritical reconstruction of the process by which the *Kerugma* of the primitive Church was overlaid by the Gnostic-Catholic religion of the Hellenistic world. And it is all done in the name of scientific history. Yet the whole reconstruction is based upon a few simple dogmas of the modern mind: miracles do not happen, and therefore a large part of the apostolic witness must be explained away. The apostolic world-view is a mythology compounded of fantastic Jewish apocalyptic and legendary Greek Gnosticism, and the Gospel must therefore be demythologised. When the flesh of first century history has thus been cut from it, the skeleton of the Gospel turns out to be the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith, and all that remains to be done is to re-clothe it in the respectable garments of Heidegger's philosophy. Those of us who are not disposed to surrender the Catholic faith in favour of this attenuated and unhistorical Protestantism will at once question Bultmann's basic assumptions. We will notice that anything which accords with these assumptions is at once accepted as fact. For instance, Bultmann never questions the view that the Similitudes of Enoch is a pre-Christian work, representative of the outlook of Jesus and his disciples. Or again, Bultmann has no hesitation in using the Hellenistic literature of the second and following centuries for the reconstruction of his "Gnostic myth", which he then discovers in the New Testament. For the evidence that the myth existed in the first century he turns to such literature as Colossians-Ephesians and the Gospel according to St. John. But these writings can be used as evidence for his thesis only if it is first established that the so-called Gnostic myth was already a dominating influence in the thought-world of the first century, so that it would be reasonable to explore the possibility that they attempt to restate the Christian *Kerugma* in Gnostic categories. If, however, there is no evidence outside the New Testament itself for the prevalence of such categories, then the attempt to interpret the New Testament by means of them is anachronistic, because the New Testament literature is clearly patent of another and more Hebraic interpretation. It would appear that Bultmann finds in the New Testament merely what he wants to find in it, and nothing more.

But this is what happens to every attempt to write history. That is to say, the "scientific" study of history does not reveal the categories by which the historical "facts" are to be interpreted; these categories must be supplied by the historian himself. His interpretation of what happened in history will be controlled by his *a priori* conceptions of what is likely to have happened. The historian must always bring to his study of history principles of interpretation which the so-called historical facts do not themselves disclose. What makes a man a good historian is not his capacity to amass a great quantity of facts but his ability to interpret them. This work of interpretation, whether he understands the matter or not, is the result of the historian's own personal scheme of values, his fundamental philosophical outlook, his ideological assumptions and subjective categories. In other words, if we do not accept Bultmann's philosophy it is improbable that we shall be disposed to accept his reconstruction of the New Testament history.

From considerations of this kind certain conclusions would appear to follow for our view of the relation of historical and biblical theology. First, the historical theologian is, no more than the biblical theologian, working with "objective" historical truths which are independent of the personal and subjective attitude of the investigator. The distinction between historical and biblical theology is thus seen not to be an ultimate one; it is at best only a rough and ready way of indicating the interests and methods of approach of particular investigators. Neither the historical nor the biblical theologian is immune from the critical attention of the philosophical theologian who asks basic questions concerning the underlying assumptions of their work. What is the justification of Bultmann's undiscussed assumptions, such as that miracles do not happen, or that ultimate truth must be expressed non-mythologically in existentialist categories? These matters do not arise out of his reconstruction of history; on the contrary, his reconstruction of history proceeds directly out of them. We must conclude that in the final issue there is no such thing as historical theology, if by that term is meant a reconstruction of the theology of any given period that is objectively independent of the investigator's personal point of view.

It may now be asked whether a second conclusion is involved in this first one, namely, that there is no such thing as objective history and that we have no means to escape from the subjectivity of the historian's personal and ideological categories. In any absolute sense it is clear that the attainment of objectivity in historical reconstruction is impossible. But such considerations need not deter the historian from going about his proper work. After all, natural scientists have been able to continue with their research and its technological applications without waiting for philosophers to tell them whether any objective knowledge of the physical world is possible; they have quite a lot to do without asking philosophical questions. The same is true of historians, including biblical scholars and church historians of every kind; they will go on—in Acton's phrase—getting their meals in the kitchen without taking time off to attend the symposium which goes on in the halls of philosophy. The question which was posed by the rise and

progress of natural science in the seventeenth century was faced by Kant in the eighteenth: how is scientific knowledge possible? The question which has been raised by the rise and progress of historical science in the nineteenth century has not yet received any very sustained treatment by philosophers in the twentieth century: how is historical knowledge possible? What is "history" but a complicated web of ideas in the mind of the historian, and how are these ideas related to past events which, *ex hypothesi*, are no longer in existence? What sort of theory of historical truth do we need? Is it a "correspondence theory" or a "coherence theory"? How can our historical ideas be said to correspond with events which are past and no longer exist? But if coherence is the test, how are we to distinguish between a well written historical novel and a carefully documented work of historical reconstruction? And, in any case, is history coherent? Does it not differ from natural phenomena in being unique, unrepeatable, irreducible to types and laws? If, for example, there are unity and coherence in Gibbon's account of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, is that not due rather to the eighteenth century categories through which Gibbon sees history than to any coherence in the historical events themselves? These are deep questions, and they cannot be answered incidentally in the course of such a paper as this. But it is necessary that we should bear them in mind, for we need to be continually reminded that the study of historical theology, in so far at least as it aims at historical reconstruction, must always be accompanied by a ruthless criticism of our basic assumptions. If we are honest with ourselves in undertaking such self-criticism, we shall at least be preserved from the naïveté of imagining that we are free from the element of subjectivity and that we are writing purely "scientific" history. If we are honest with our readers, we shall make quite clear the standpoint from which we write.

It is very important to notice that the admission that there can be no such thing as "objective" or "scientific" history does not mean that the study of history has no value or that there is no such thing as historical truth. To draw any such sceptical conclusion from what we have said above would be to surrender abjectly to the positivists and scientific humanists. According to all forms of positivism and scientific humanism, the only statements which can be accepted as true are those which are capable of verification by the method which has yielded such remarkable results in the sphere of natural science. The current ideology of our age accepts this dogma as self-obvious. We must, however, deny its validity. Truth is reached in subjectivity as well as in objectivity, or perhaps we should say that a different level of truth is reached through subjective insight from that which is discovered by means of the method of the natural sciences. We must be on our guard against the use of such phrases as "merely subjective" as they are frequently employed in a disparaging sense; they imply a conscious or unconscious acceptance of the dogma of scientific humanism. History must necessarily contain an element of subjectivity, but it is not therefore to be written off as "merely subjective". All history (as I

have argued elsewhere[3]) is *somebody's* history—Gibbon's, or Macaulay's or Trevelyan's, and it is this personal quality of the historian's work which gives it its interest and value. It is the perspective from which he sees things, the scale of values by which he judges them, which makes the work of this or that historian of literally unique significance. In the natural sciences we try to rid ourselves of all subjectivity; we stand outside the objects of our investigation and look at them through a telescope or a microscope and observe them as disinterestedly or objectively as we can. In history, on the other hand, this is neither desirable nor possible. We cannot stand outside history, for we are inextricably involved in it, and our whole personality is totally engaged in the study of it. Every historian who is writing history in the full sense of the word is, whether he recognizes the fact or not, writing his own history; he is engaged in writing the autobiography of the human race, and for that reason all true historical writing is autobiographical, or is self-portraiture. Bultmann's theology is essentially "a portrait of the artist by himself"; that is what makes it so fascinating and so important.

In other words, history is an entirely different type of mental discipline from the disciplines which are called by the name of natural science. Apart from the personal and subjective categories of the historian there can be no true history, that is, an imaginative reconstruction of a period or an epoch. The kind of truth with which history deals is subjective, not objective. To those brought up under the influence of the positivistic dogma that scientific truth is the only kind of truth, this statement will sound like an admission that there is no truth of history; but to those who have come to think that the only way to true knowledge of reality is through the subjective apprehension of the prophet, artist, dramatist, metaphysician, man of action, and so on, it will arouse neither surprise nor despondency. If we accept any kind of religious view of the universe at all, it is obvious that there must be an insight into the world of meaning and value and reality which lies behind the phenomenal world that is investigated by means of the five senses, as they are magnified ten thousand-fold by the ingenious techniques of the natural scientists. The principle of interpretation by means of which the reconstruction of an epoch or a period is made, and without which no history could be written, is indeed subjective; it comes into conflict with the subjective principles of interpretation employed by other historians; but out of this clash of subjective interpretations new insights and fresh interpretations, which possess an ever wider universality, are reached. Thus, though no final and definitive history of any given epoch or period will ever be attained by historians *sub specie temporis*, new depths of understanding will always be possible, the aberrations and eccentricities of individual interpretations will be corrected, and views which may be described as truly historical will—theoretically at any rate—be attainable. Hence we need not be afraid of the admission that there must inevitably be in the historical and human sciences an element of subjectivity such as would not be present in the natural sciences. This does not mean that the historical

sciences are in any way inferior in truth-value to the natural sciences; it means merely that they deal with a different order of knowledge, knowledge which is accessible only to the subjective or intensely personal apprehension of individual historians, theologians, metaphysicians, artists, poets, dramatists, novelists, prophets, mystics—where shall we stop?

We are now in a position to consider in the light of these conclusions what we ought to mean by "biblical theology". This expression should not be taken to imply merely an historico-literary enquiry into the theological teaching of the various biblical books; this would be historical theology in one of its forms. We might tentatively adopt some such definition as the following: biblical theology is the attempt to understand the biblical literature and history from the standpoint of biblical faith. That is to say, the biblical theologian personally accepts the faith to which the Bible testifies and finds in it the key to his interpretation of biblical history and literature. In doing this he makes no pretence of being impartial or objective; on the contrary, he makes as explicit as he can the assumptions or principles of interpretation by which he conducts his research into the literature of the Bible and constructs his account of the biblical history. He will have no need to disguise them, or to apologise for them; indeed, he will glory in them. He will believe that he possesses the only true key to the interpretation of the Scriptures, since Christ alone is the key which unlocks their mysteries.

We have said that biblical theology is the attempt to understand the biblical literature and history from the point of view of biblical faith. If now we are asked what is meant by biblical faith, we would reply briefly and simply: "faith in Christ." The main principle of interpretation of biblical theology is the assumption that the meaning of the Old Testament lies in its proclamation of the Christ who should come, while the meaning of the New Testament is found in its testimony that Jesus of Nazareth is he. It is Christ who draws together all the diverse strands of both the Old and the New Testaments. There is no need whatever for the biblical theologian to minimise the diversity of the different parts and outlooks of the Scriptures, or to pretend that all sections of the Bible testify equally to Christ. Nor is there any need to deny that the insights of, say, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment or of modern liberalism are invalid because they are not directly derived from the biblical revelation. We are not bound by the intellectual or moral standards of either the Fathers or the Reformation. "The mind of Christ", as we can know it with the aid of every available historical method of inquiry, is to be our sole criterion in matters of interpretation and of action. In the seventeenth century—to take an illustration I have used elsewhere[4]—theologians generally thought that the command, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exod. 22: 18), was as binding as, say, the command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exod. 20: 14): To-day we do not think so. Our changed attitude is doubtless due to the insights of the Enlightenment, but in giving our judgment we would none-

theless say, "I think I have the mind of Christ". The biblical theologian is not constrained to assert that there is no revelation of the will of God outside the pages of the Bible; all he would claim is that we can recognize what is the will of God, if we can know it at all, because of the revelation of that will in the historical situations of which we learn from the Bible. The Bible sets forth God's character and will as having been made known amidst certain situations in human history, in man's encounter with that will in his faith and obedience. For this very reason the biblical theologian must always take history seriously. Because God is known in history, the most searching and rigorous scrutiny of the biblical history, with the aid of every technique which the development of modern historical method has placed in our hands, is a matter of absolute obligation for the biblical theologian. For him, therefore, there can be no stepping out of history, no relaxation of the strictest historical discipline, no short-cuts through historical problems however "congruous" a particular solution might appear from the standpoint of the systematic theologian. He will be especially on his guard against imposing upon the biblical history patterns and types which that history itself does not suggest. Even his own deepest conviction, that it is Christ who gives unity and meaning to the biblical history and literature, will be subjected to the fiercest examination and test that historical criticism itself can devise. And there will be ample opportunity to discuss with other biblical theologians an uncountable number of differing interpretations of this or that feature of the biblical history and literature, for biblical theology is not a system of ready-made answers to historical and literary questions. It is rather a starting-point, or perhaps we should say a perspective, from which all matters of scholarship are to be seen. It does not prescribe in advance any answers to critical problems; but it predisposes the enquirer to rest dissatisfied with any interpretation which arises out of non-biblical categories of judgment or which sets aside the biblical testimony to Christ.

Although, as we have said, biblical theology is not a system of dogmatics developed by a school of interpreters who can be labelled "biblical theologians", it is clear nevertheless that there is likely to be a certain measure of agreement between biblical scholars whose perspective is that of faith in Christ, that is, a personal acceptance of the biblical witness to Christ; and similarly there is likely to be a radical differentiation between them and all other investigators whose standpoint is not that of personal commitment to the biblical testimony. Take, for example, the question of the miracles of the Gospels. If I start from belief in the biblical affirmation of the living God who is the Lord both of history and of nature, and if I accept the biblical testimony that Jesus of Nazareth is the unique incarnation of this God in all his character of δύναμις and κυριότης, then I shall have rejected other assumptions, such as that miracles do not happen, which are grounded in a positivistic type of philosophy. My judgment as historian concerning the historicity of the Gospel miracles is likely to be different from the verdict of historians who start from positivistic assumptions. History

pure and simple—if such a thing exists at all—cannot settle such questions as that of whether the miracles happened. But that does not mean that we are to accept all the stories of miracles recorded in the Gospels in an uncritical and obscurantist way; it means that we are not to allow the witness of the Bible to be set aside in the interests of non-biblical *a priori* assumptions. I have been accused of accepting all the miracles of the Gospels in general and none of them in particular; but I cannot help thinking that this is a rather unfair caricature of my argument. The argument urges that, so far from miracles being ruled out on *a priori* grounds, belief in the living God would rather predispose us to look for 'miracles and signs' from him, because the living God of the Bible is essentially the God of miracle; therefore we are able to turn to a historical investigation of the Gospel miracle-stories and let the historical testimony speak for itself; and then, I think, we shall conclude, when all extraneous assumptions have been put aside, that the evidence (for instance) that Jesus healed a dropsical man on the Sabbath day is just as strong as that he taught the parable of the Good Samaritan. The *historical* evidence for both stories is of precisely equal weight.

The acceptance by biblical theologians of that which testifies to Christ as constituting the essence of the biblical revelation is the criterion by which all the historical evidence of the Bible is to be judged. It is a criterion which is applicable to the biblical material as well as to insights derived from non-biblical sources. If, for example, I am asked about the story in II Kings 2: 23-25 about the forty-two children who cried "bald head" after Elisha and were eaten by two she-bears, I must reply that since I cannot see that this incident testifies in any way to the truth of Christ, I cannot judge it to be a necessary part of the biblical history. The miracles of Jesus, however, as recorded in the Gospels, are of quite a different order, because their rejection would entirely alter the portrait of the historical Jesus which has been handed down to us by the apostolic witnesses; if we cannot accept their testimony, then we can no longer share their faith in the Son of God whose almighty power was declared most chiefly in shewing mercy and pity, and we would once more be committed to the fruitless attempt of reconstructing a historical account of Jesus which must begin by setting aside the only available historical testimony out of deference to modern ideological assumptions. This is the well-trodden road to historical scepticism, and the biblical theologian has no need to set out along it. The fact is that if we reject the apostolic testimony to the historical life and words of Christ, no other historical reconstruction of the life of Jesus and the origins of his Church and her faith is credible at all.

Thus it is that biblical theologians will claim with confidence that theirs is the only perspective from which a truly *historical* view of biblical and Christian origins and development can be reached. We must believe (though, in the absence of a fully articulated philosophy of history, we cannot assert that it is more than a belief) that the correct perspective, or the valid

categories of interpretation, will give the most satisfyingly historical account of the biblical events and will make possible the most convincing reconstruction of the biblical history. The standpoint of Christian faith is the only perspective from which the historical events can be seen clearly, rationally and coherently. Such an assertion will, of course, for ever remain (*sub specie temporis*) a matter of faith, since historical interpretation is not susceptible of verification after the manner of the natural sciences; in history we cannot "repeat the experiment" as we can in chemistry. But a certain measure of accreditation is possible. If our categories of interpretation succeed in making sense of the evidence of the biblical witnesses; if we find that we have less of the testimony to explain away; if, in short, our subjective categories enable us to reach something like a coherent and intelligible history, then we shall to that extent be encouraged to think that our categories are the right ones. We would not be historians at all if we did not believe that the right categories of interpretation would yield us a truly objective understanding of the events as they actually occurred, for this is what is meant by "history". Of course this is an assumption—that an objective interpretation of events can be attained if we look at them from the *right* perspective; but it is an assumption that we must make, consciously or unconsciously, if we attempt the task of writing history. Of course, no absolute perspective is attainable in this life, for we are men and not God; and the correction of the distortions of our perspective will always be necessary. Yet we must believe that some perspectives yield a truer or more objective view of the facts than others; and it is the task of the biblical theologian to demonstrate that the perspective of faith in Christ yields a more truly *historical* view than any other. We cannot, of course, persuade others that the perspective of Christian faith yields the most adequate view of the biblical facts if they will not even attempt to look at them from the Christian point of view; but we need not be unduly disturbed by the fact that those who do not possess Christian faith do not see what we see. The ancient word of wisdom is true of historical enquiry, as of other matters: "If you do not believe, you will not understand." The paradox of Christian epistemology is simply this, that faith in all its subjectivity is that which alone can make a rational or objective view of things possible.

Notes

1. *The Scientific Method*, 1923, p. 6.
2. *Speculations* (Ed. Herbert Read), 2nd ed., 1936, pp. 50f. See my *Christian Apologetics*, 1947, pp. 65ff.
3. *Christian Apologetics*, pp. 92–104.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 222n.

Righteousness from God

KENNETH HAMILTON

> Protestantism was born out of the struggle for the doctrine of justification by faith. This idea is strange to the man of to-day and even to Protestant people in the churches. . . . This whole complex of ideas which for more than a century—not so very long ago—was discussed in every household and workshop, in every market and country inn in Germany, is now scarcely understandable to our most intelligent scholars.

THESE words of Paul Tillich[1] are not to be taken too literally, especially in view of what Tillich has said elsewhere about the way the teaching of Martin Kaehler on justification took root and budded in his own understanding[2]. In our present age theology is certainly more remote from the market and the workshop than it used to be—as well as more remote from the life of the churches than it ought to be—and few doctrinal issues have aroused much heat of debate among any but theologians. The doctrine of justification has passed largely into academic hands, where it may have become partly petrified into a formula. Yet the theologians have, at the worst, never quite forgotten it; and, in the twentieth-century revival of Reformation theology associated with the name of Barth, it has come back again as a living issue. Not only so, for the expansion of the ecumenical movement has made it a focus of controversy. Once more it is the centre of a struggle. Happily, this time it is primarily a struggle to understand. Theologians who find themselves divided by theological traditions which belong on opposite sides of the fence with regard to this doctrine are taking pains to find out precisely where their differences lie and how essential or non-essential their conflict of view-point is. It is one of the signs of the times that the latest volume carrying the title of *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*[3] is the record of a conference on this subject attended by representatives of the "Catholic" and "Evangelical" schools of thought within the Church of England. (Incidentally, the appearance of such a book is a reminder that the ecumenical movement is not just an inter-denominational affair moving in the direction of Church union, but even more essentially a growing toward Church *unity*).

But if the doctrine of justification is coming again into the theological picture in no uncertain way, it is coming with a difference. This is not simply because the church background to-day is very unlike that of the days of the Reformation, and Christians are learning how to speak the truth in love. It is also because Christian theologians in every ecclesiastical tradition are looking at this historic doctrine with pre-suppositions belonging to the twentieth century and not to the sixteenth. The doctrine can never

mean to us exactly what it meant to our fore-fathers, because we do not stand in their shoes or look from earth to heaven with their eyes. In this relation, even the most learned historical scholarship will fail to bring alive the doctrine out of the past. Not that its truth has changed, but to-day we put to it new questions and so receive new answers. And perhaps what our generation is asking most anxiously and persistently of the doctrine is what it can tell us about man's nature and his capacity for receiving God's grace. Does goodness come from God's side only when He justifies men, or does some element of goodness in men reach out to meet God's goodness?

Of course, in a sense the doctrine has always been concerned to answer this question, which has been debated often enough in the past. When Luther looked back for support in connection with his "discovery" of justification by faith alone, he found it in Augustine's argument against Pelagius that grace was God's free gift and not the result of man's moral effort. But in Reformation times the doctrine was prized above all because it brought with it certainty of salvation. To-day, although the questions at issue are all ones that have been raised before, the emphasis appears to be less upon the kind of salvation man receives than upon the kind of man it is who receives salvation: an *anthropological* rather than a *soteriological* emphasis. Even when it is the nature of salvation which is being discussed, most often the terms applied to salvation seem to be chosen with a view to their suitability for establishing a doctrine of man.

This emphasis on the human end of the encounter between man and God is most clearly seen when justification "according to Luther" is under critical fire. A short time back, the present Archbishop of Canterbury asked for some statements to be prepared by groups who should review the theological situation in England as it affected the possible future of Church union. The first of these statements was produced from the Anglo-Catholic side and was called *Catholicity*.[4] In it, Luther's "by faith alone" was mentioned and rejected. But the treatment of justification was subordinated to an attack upon what the authors of *Catholicity* took to be Luther's view of the natural order of creation, so that when an answer appeared from the British Free Church side[5] this was forced to give much more space to an exposition of what Luther had in fact taught about man in creation, total depravity, the scope of the human intellect and free-will, than to justification itself. The concern to uphold the status of the natural order (and thus of man) evidenced in *Catholicity* arises as a protest against Luther's having made redemption the central issue in theology. Appeal to the doctrine of creation in this context is made in order to establish some positive value inhering in the nature of unredeemed man. It is noteworthy that no single point in Barthian theology is so often quoted as Barth's denial of a "point of contact" between man and God existing in man himself; Barth's description of man, and not his insistence upon the unlimited sovereignty of God, has provoked scandalized reactions. Recently, in this *Journal*, A. S. Dewdney found the central argument of Anders Nygren's *Agape and Eros* unaccept-

able because of its rejection of *eros* (man's natural striving to rise to the good) as the point of contact with divine *agape* (God's condescending grace).

Nygren expounds an uncompromising Reformation theology. He holds to the central Lutheran tradition by assuming that any Christian doctrine of man must be drawn from a Biblical doctrine of redemption, and not *vice versa*. In so doing he not only offends "Catholic" and "liberal" theologians. His complete separation of *agape* and *eros* has not been looked on with favour by such severe critics of liberal Protestanism as Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich. Yet his consistency is impressive. It is much easier to find fault with his conclusions than to refute his arguments. It is one thing to point out that there are alternative views which can claim support from passages in the New Testament. It is quite another thing to show that these alternatives do not fall before Nygren's own criticisms as being alien in spirit to the New Testament and false to the Gospel proclaimed there. To proceed as Mr. Dewdney has done, for instance, and to label Nygren a heretic for neglecting the "wholeness" of Catholic truth is to appeal to just that theological tradition which Nygren repudiates. To insist that truth lies with "synthesis" is to declare invalid the Reformation theology Nygren is presenting, without taking into account the ground upon which that theology is based.

Nygren does not insist on God's outgoing *agape* (descending to man apart from any upward reach of *eros* from man to God) because he has arbitrarily chosen to concentrate upon one element in the New Testament to the exclusion of other equally prominent elements. He argues that if the *agape* of the New Testament is accepted, then *eros* must of necessity be ruled out. In *Agape and Eros* much space is given to showing that when a union between *agape* and *eros* is attempted, the result is always to destroy any true understanding of *agape*. Those who seek God in this fashion are shut off from the grace which comes down to them as sinners powerless to rise to God by their own efforts. This is not mere theory, but has been demonstrated in the history of the Church. Men have constructed "heavenly ladders" by means of which they have thought to climb up to God by their own efforts: the Way of Merit, the Inner Way of Mysticism, and the Way of Speculative Thought. Reformation theology broke with the synthesis of philosophy and theology achieved by Rome because it saw the results of this synthesis and was compelled to repudiate them as evidence of a betrayal of the Gospel of Christ. On any other count, the Reformation must be regarded as an error and a lamentable misfortune, even if excusable in the light of history. Nygren believes that the Reformation was a recovery of a true Christian witness, and that Luther's watch-word, "by faith alone", was the authentic note of that witness.

For the positive basis upon which the inability of man to respond to God was proclaimed we should turn to Nygren's powerful *Commentary on Romans*[6] which, if not so much of a theological land-mark as Barth's famous

book on the same Epistle, is likely to "date" less than the other. Nygren finds that the main theme of Romans is the new righteousness which came with Jesus: the righteousness belonging to the Kingdom of God. This new righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees because it superseded the righteousness of the law. It was *the righteousness of God*, or—it was the same thing—*righteousness from God*. Nygren quotes Philippians 3: 4-9: "If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: . . . as to righteousness under the law blameless. But whatever gain I had I counted as loss for the sake of Christ . . . For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith."[7] This righteousness from God, being quite other than the righteousness of the law, makes it impossible for us to imagine that it has anything to do with any righteousness we may happen to possess. In Romans, says Nygren, Paul uses every kind of device to drive home the point that *we* do nothing about God's righteousness but receive it. Luther wrote in the beginning of his exposition of the Epistle: "The sum total of this epistle is to destroy, root out, and bring to naught all carnal wisdom and righteousness."[8] Of course, a certain righteousness does belong to man, in so far as he obeys the law of God, and this relative righteousness is of great importance in man's ethical relation to his fellows. But the new righteousness which comes from God, and by which man is related to God, is not ethical righteousness or else it would come under the law and effect nothing new.

By separating these two kinds of righteousness, Nygren is able to show that a common view of justification by faith, which makes faith a substitute (perhaps an easy substitute) for good works, is mistaken. God does not replace the moral obligation to obey the law by the moral obligation to have faith. God's righteousness "depends on faith", but it depends upon God's gift of faith and not upon man's decision to have faith. Nygren finds it strange that theologians should have so misunderstood faith as to "have assigned co-operative roles to God and man, attempting to determine what each must contribute in the work of salvation"[9]—as though the Gospel were only a power for salvation when man reacted on his side with faith. That a man has faith is rather evidence that the Gospel has exercised its power on him. The contrary view has been put forward by F. H. Maycock, Principal of Pusey House, Oxford, in an essay on "Justification by Faith and the Means of Salvation" from the above-mentioned *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*. Principal Maycock writes that, when reconciliation of man with God takes place, "The means by which it is accomplished in man is man's discovery of his powerlessness and of the nature of sin; as a result he hands himself over to Incarnate Charity and his recreation in Christ begins".[10] Such a statement would strike Nygren as quite unintelligible. How can any one who is powerless *hand himself over*? To speak in one breath of man's

powerlessness and also of man's decision being the means of his salavation is a halting between a theology of grace and a theology of works which succeeds in making the worst of both theological worlds. Either we take the will's impotence seriously, or we do not. Either we accept grace as God's free gift or we make it wait upon our own choosing, which means that our response itself is a grace which God cannot give us, but which we possess in our own right.

The Reformation theology expounded by Nygren has never hesitated to confront men with a decisive Either/Or instead of encouraging them to think they can have their cake and eat it too. Luther's "by faith alone" means that, if we believe that righteousness is from God, we do not at the same time save a little corner for human righteousness in order to safeguard, perhaps, moral experience. It means that we ought to face up to the truth that the experience of faith is not moral experience and may well negate such experience.

> Make me a captive, Lord,
> And then I shall be free;
> Force me to render up my sword,
> And I shall conqueror be.

The nineteenth-century piety of George Matheson's lines retains the paradoxical form exhibited also in the writings of a Luther, a Kierkegaard, or a Barth. But, taken merely as piety and as poetry, such sentiments lose the *scandalizing* quality that theological assertions possess. Not the least virtue which belongs to Nygren's drastic division between the righteousness of God and the righteousness of man is that, by cutting through a moralistic and legalistic approach to faith, it opens up the way for a truly creative Christian ethics. The pages in *Commentary on Romans* dealing with Paul's moral teaching refute the charge often brought against such theologies as Nygren's: that they make God into a tyrant and thus destroy the foundations of morality.

If Nygren's division between the righteousness from God and man's righteousness does not deny the need for moral effort, it may still be objected that it creates an unbridgeable gulf between creation and redemption which, by its disparagement of the natural order, displays an almost Manichean contempt for God's creation. This objection arises because of a fundamental difference in method which distinguishes the type of theology aiming at "synthesis" and a theology of Either/Or. The first attempts to read Creation, the Fall, the Incarnation, and Redemption as points on a map which can be grasped in one sweep of the mind. We can survey this map and find the relation of each feature on it to one another, in this way being enabled to guess the purpose of the whole. Such a theology is willing to speculate on the reason for Creation, or whether the Incarnation would have been necessary had there been no Fall. Its assumption is that nature is

not to be destroyed but perfected in God's plan of redemption. To quote Principal Maycock again on what Justification means:

> As Christians grow in grace it is clear to them that they are not being turned into something different disconnected with their nature, nor are they being left unaffected by the application of some external remedy. The process is rather the uncovering and releasing of the created image of God in them, the collecting together of the relics and fragments of Original Righteousness in them and the re-making of the original pattern . . . It is best seen as the restoration to man of his original endowment and the additional gift of forgiveness and healing so that he may become an adopted Son of God united to Christ in His joyful and eternal self-offering to the Father.[11]

The imagery in this passage has as its key words *pattern* and *process*. A static pattern is pictured, which is shattered and later restored—with additions not radically altering it. The process of re-making is a temporary interval without significance except that of making possible a return to the original perfection of the pattern. Such a view *sub specie aeternitatis* is quite foreign to the Biblical view of God's self-revelation in history which, as Nygren finds in Romans, is essentially dynamic. Paul's conception, according to Nygren, is of two aeons: the old aeon where God's wrath is displayed against man's unrighteousness, and the new aeon where God manifests His glory by displaying His righteousness. Instead of a restoration, the coming of Christ ushers in a new age. Instead of an "additional gift", through Christ is given life, peace with God and salvation from the wrath to come. In this context it is meaningless to speak of nature being perfected but not destroyed; the new aeon abolishes the old. Has Creation then no value? So far as the question arises for man, Nygren answers in effect, the *present* creation is in opposition to God. Arguing that Paul's cry to be delivered from "this body of death" belongs to his experience of the Christian life and is no mere recalling of his state of mind before conversion, Nygren says that in this life every believer lives in the two aeons and feels the tensions between them. The Christian still is part of the old aeon while he is "in the flesh", although "in Christ" he partakes of the new.

Nygren's reading of the story of our salvation is thus one which denies *any independent* worth to Creation. On the other hand, it is one which retains to the full the Biblical emphasis on the finality of God's intervention in history and His self-revelation in His Son. To the criticism that he has not fully grasped the "wholeness" of the Gospel, Nygren would probably reply that he has been concerned solely with faithfulness to the Gospel, and, unless he is proved faulty in this respect, what he has rejected must be regarded as unwarrantable additions—"another gospel"—contrary to the Word of God.

It is extraordinarily difficult for those who belong to a tradition of theology which proceeds by way of synthesis, and which has harmonized the New Testament with a "perennial philosophy", not to dismiss a Biblical

theology as extreme and one-sided. It is just as difficult for those in the opposite camp not to dismiss their critics in turn, saying that they have neglected the commandments of God for the traditions of men. But, if the ecumenical spirit is to thrive, it must be by patient willingness to hear what others believe the Spirit has taught them, and by refraining from accusations and counter-accusations. The doctrine of justification by faith, raising as it does the problem of the doctrine of man, is just the kind of meeting-place where we may best seek to face our differences squarely. Those whom we believe to be wrong may be those who, in the Providence of God, have been sent to open to us truths we have shut out of our hearts. The discipline of theology is of limited use if we employ it only to measure all theologies by the standards which govern our own thinking. Its real value is to help us to penetrate, by means of the theological symbols other people have constructed, to the faith on which their theology is grounded.

Notes

1. "The Protestant Message and the Man of Today" from *The Protestant Era* by Paul Tillich (translated by James Luther Adams), p. 196. University of Chicago Press, 1948.
2. *Ibid.*, Preface, pp. xiv–xv.
3. G. W. H. Lampe, Ed. A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1954.
4. *Catholicity. A Study in the Conflict of Christian Traditions in the West. Being a report presented to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.* Faber and Faber, 1947.
5. *The Catholicity of Protestantism. Being a report presented to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury by a group of Free Churchmen.* Edited by R. Newton Flew and Rupert E. Davies. Lutterworth Press, 1950.
6. References are to the translation by Carl C. Rasmussen in the edition published by the SCM Press, 1952.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13. I have shortened Nygren's quotation.
8. P. 15.
9. P. 70.
10. P. 87.
11. Pp. 94–95.

By Schism Rent Asunder: A Study of the Disruption of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1844

NEIL GREGOR SMITH

THE long controversy over patronage in the Church of Scotland was followed with interest by all groups in the Presbyterian churches in Canada. It was held to be a fundamental principle of Presbyterian procedure that no pastor should be intruded on a parish contrary to the will of the people. With the restoration of patronage in the Church of Scotland in 1712 it was possible for a minister, nominated by the patrons of the parish, to be inducted into a charge contrary to the wishes of the congregation. This situation gave rise to endless difficulties.[1] Many in the Scottish church saw no possibility of relief from the evils of patronage except in seceding from the establishment. As the Scottish controversy approached its climax in 1843 all of the Colonial Presbyterian churches which had ties with the Church of Scotland were disturbed and agitated by the dispute.

The majority of ministers and members of the Presbyterian churches in Canada had come from churches of the old land, and although the issues of the dispute did not directly concern the Canadian churches, it was almost inevitable that repercussions of a division in the Church of Scotland should be felt in Canada. The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland was, at the moment, in a strong and encouraging position. A union with the Synod of Upper Canada, a group of Secessionist churches, had been consummated in 1840, bringing an addition of seventeen ministers and about ten thousand members to its strength. Congregations were increasing rapidly with the growth of settlements and the influx of immigrants from Scotland and Ireland. New communities were petitioning the presbyteries for the establishing of churches and the supply of religious ordinances. The pleas of religious destitution addressed so often to the churches of the old land, were appeals for more and more ministers to cope with a rapidly expanding field of labour. Queen's College had been established in Kingston to help to meet the ever-increasing demand for ministers. The securing of a proportionate share of the Clergy Reserves had given welcome assistance towards the maintenance of an effective ministry. Altogether the prospects of the Church of Scotland Synod in Canada were bright with promise.

Upon this church, so happily situated, and with such opportunities for expansion, the Free Church controversy cast an ominous shadow. In the disruption of the Canadian church in 1844 passions were aroused which embittered relations between Presbyterian groups for years to come. The

Missionary Presbytery of the Canadas (a group of Secessionist churches which had not entered the union of 1840) and congregations in the Niagara area, where the ties were closer to American Presbyterianism, were not directly involved in the controversy. With these minor exceptions the whole Presbyterian church in Canada became embroiled over the dispute as to how ministers were to be settled in vacant parishes in Scotland. The present paper is an attempt to summarize the course of the disruption of the church in Canada, and to note some of its more obvious causes and consequences.

I

At its meeting in 1840 the Canadian Synod expressed its sympathy with the Church of Scotland in the trials through which it was passing:

> Regarding as we always do, with intense and affectionate interest, our native land, and the national church in which we have been blessed, we cannot refrain from expressing our deep sympathy for your beloved Zion in her present state of perplexity and trial. For our brethren and companions' sake we can never cease to say, 'Peace be within thee.' Our hope and prayer is that she shall be brought out of the furnace as gold purified by the fire. With an affection undiminished by distance and long separation, we bear her up in our remembrance before the throne of grace.[2]

At their meeting in the following year they drafted a petition to the Queen, asking that such measures should be taken as would secure the rights and claims of the Church of Scotland. It was particularly requested "that the wishes of the people may be duly regarded in the settlement of their Ministers, and that the secular courts be restrained from all interference in the spiritual concerns of the Church".[3] In 1842 the Synod again expressed its sympathy with the mother church in the struggle she was maintaining "against the encroachments of the Civil power",[4] and instructed the committee on correspondence to give "unequivocal expression" to the views of the Synod.

When the Synod met in July, 1843, the fateful disruption had already taken place in the Church of Scotland. Nearly five hundred ministers had severed their connection with the establishment to form "The Assembly of the Free Protesting Church of Scotland". The seceders were confident that the true lineaments of the Church of Scotland were to be seen in the actions of the protesting church, and disdainfully observed that in the proceedings of those who remained within the establishment there was nothing "which either the Christian men of the present day regard with any interest, or which posterity will care to know".[5] Administration for the men who made great sacrifices in going out of the established church in loyalty to their principles was mingled with sorrow that a great national church had been rent asunder.

No official communication from either side had been delivered to the Canadian Synod when its meeting began. On July 7 an overture was presented from the Presbytery of Hamilton embodying a series of resolutions

concerning the state of the Church of Scotland. A committee was appointed to consider the resolutions and bring in a report at a later meeting. On July 11 the committee reported that they could come to no agreement. A motion to defer consideration of the issue until more information was available concerning "the late, unhappy event in the Mother Church" was defeated by a vote of twenty-five to thirteen.

Four resolutions were then presented and discussed. One expressed the wholehearted sympathy of the Synod with the Free Church movement, assuring its sponsors of the Synod's prayers for the success of the "glorious cause" in which they suffered. A second expressed the sympathy of the Synod for the Church of Scotland, and the hope that the breach made in its ranks would speedily be healed. A third simply expressed regret that a division had been made in the Church in Scotland and a desire that such a division should be avoided in Canada. None of these resolutions received the support of the Synod. A fourth resolution, sponsored by Dr. Cook of Quebec and Mr. McGill of Niagara, was a carefully worded statement which attempted to embody the divergent views represented in the Synod. It affirmed the faith of the Synod in the supreme headship of Christ over his church, for which the Free Church was contending. It expressed regret over the encroachments of the State upon the freedom of the church in Scotland. It pointed out that the issue involved in the controversy was one which did not directly affect the church in Canada:

> This Synod have yet to record their gratitude to God that He, in His good providence, does not call on them to enter on the discussion or decision for themselves of the practical bearings of those principles in respect to either any infringement of the spiritual independence of this church, or of the privileges of its members, or to the connection which subsists between the Church of Scotland and this Synod.[6]

The connection of the Canadian Synod with the Church of Scotland was one which did not involve the Canadian church in responsibility for the acts of the Church of Scotland. It was concluded that "this Synod do now, as always, recognize the imperious obligation laid on them of seeking the peace and well-being of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, at the expense of any sacrifice save that of consistency and principle".[7] This resolution, carefully and deliberately framed to avoid a division in the Canadian church, was adopted by a substantial majority (twenty-eight to eleven). Eight of the eleven members voting against the adoption of the resolution recorded their dissent.

When the Synod resumed its deliberations at seven o'clock, the Moderator reported that he had received in the mail that afternoon a communication from Dr. Welsh, Convener of the Colonial Committee of the newly formed Free Church. A similar letter had been sent to all Presbyterian ministers in the British colonies, stating the course followed by the seceding group in Scotland, and urging that Presbyterians throughout the world should proclaim their attachment to the principles for which the Free Church had

contended. The Synod, having heard the communication read, directed the Moderator to acknowledge its receipt, and to forward to Dr. Welsh a copy of the resolution which had been adopted in the afternoon. When the members dispersed to go back to their congregations it was realized that a secession from the Canadian church had been postponed, but was not necessarily averted.

During the following year the line of cleavage between the two groups widened considerably. A group in Montreal reprinted the Free Church *Protest, The Harp on the Willows*, and other Free Church tracts. In Toronto *The Banner* aggressively supported the Free Church. In many of the larger centres meetings were held to acquaint Canadian churchmen with the issues involved in the patronage controversy, and the Free Church deputies were invited to visit Canada. The Colonial Committee of the Free Church let it be known that they were gravely dissatisfied with the position assumed by the Canadian Synod, a position which was, said Dr. Welsh, "equivocal, unsatisfactory, and liable to grave misconstruction".[8] It was pointed out that by retaining their connection with the Church of Scotland the Synod was partaking of the sins of the establishment. The Free Church party in Scotland expected their sympathizers in Canada to repudiate all connections with the established church, "whose violated constitution they can no longer respect, and whose sinful subservience to the secular powers they must deplore and condemn".[9]

When the Synod met again at Kingston on July 3, 1844, Mr. Clugston, the retiring Moderator, preached the opening sermon from the text in 2 Corinthians 4: 3, "We are troubled on every side". Whatever Mr. Clugston may have said in the course of his sermon he must be credited with having chosen an appropriate text! When the thorny issue of the relation of the Synod to the Church of Scotland came up for discussion Dr. Cook of Quebec attempted to clear the air by presenting a series of propositions on which all parties might agree:

1. The Church of Scotland does exercise no jurisdiction over the Synod of Canada.
2. The Church of Scotland does not claim jurisdiction over the Synod of Canada.
3. The Church of Scotland is not entitled to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Synod of Canada.
4. The adherents of the Church in this province have ample liberty in the election of their ministers.
5. There has been no interference whatsoever, on the part of the Civil Powers with any of the Ecclesiastical courts.
6. There is not, at present, so far as can be reasonably judged, any prospect of such interference with the Ecclesiastical courts.
7. There is no external or legal let or hindrance to the extension of the Church in this province.
8. Therefore the alleged causes for disruption at home do not exist here.[10]

On points 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 there was complete unanimity. Six members dissented from the first proposition, seven from the second, and three from

the third. It will be noted that on five of the eight points, which made plain that there was no necessity for a division of the church in Canada, the members of the Synod expressed unanimous agreement. Having thus decided unanimously that there was no necessity for a disruption in Canada, the Synod proceeded with the business of disruption.

Some of the members of the Synod saw a solution to the whole problem in the dropping of the offending phrase, "in connection with the Church of Scotland", from the official title of the church. It was noted that the phrase was intended as an expression of "filial regard" only. Since its use now occasioned misunderstanding it was believed that it could be dropped without any loss. Others took the position that it was *ultra vires* of the Synod to alter its designation, and that such a change of name would be a breach of faith with the ministers and members who had attached themselves to it. The final deliverance of the Synod was very similar to that agreed to the year previously: that the Canadian church was not directly involved in the dispute which occasioned the division of the church in Scotland; that the Canadian church was independent of all outside ecclesiastical bodies, and that it would receive ministers of all other Presbyterian bodies whose qualifications were otherwise acceptable.

The minority attached to Free Church principles, led by Dr. Bayne of Galt, entered their dissent from this pronouncement of the Synod. The dissent and protest were signed by seventeen ministers,[11] who withdrew to form the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. So disruption came to the church in Canada. Numerically the loss to the Church of Scotland Synod was not very severe—twenty-two ministers in all, out of an enrolment of eighty-two. Actually, the division was much more serious than these figures indicate. The quarrel was carried to practically every congregation in Canada; churches were divided and brethren estranged. For the next thirty years the Presbyterian cause in Canada felt the effects of this division of their forces.

II

Behind the action of those who seceded from the Synod to form the Free Church was a tangled web of varied motives. After the secession in the Church of Scotland Norman Macleod wrote in his journal: "Who in the next century will know or understand the ten thousand secret influences, the vanity and pride of some, the love of applause, the fear and terror of others, and above all, the seceding mania, the revolutionary mesmerism, which I have witnessed within these few days."[12] Among Canadian churchmen there was a similar mingling of motives.

First place must be given to a sincere attachment to Free Church principles, to theological insight into the issues involved in the controversy, and the feeling of an obligation to carry their principles to their logical conclusion, separation from an establishment which they judged to be guilty of grave faults.

One point that should be noted is that there was no aversion to a close connection between Church and State on the part of those who seceded. One of the first acts of the Free Church Synod when it met in the autumn of 1844 was to apply for the continuance of the government grants which their ministers had received.[13] An impetus towards voluntaryism was given when their petition was answered with the statement that in the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown, "said allowances could not be continued on account of the new position in which the Synod stand".[14] *The Presbyterian Magazine*, the publication of the Missionary Presbytery in Canada, scoffed at the time of the disruption in Scotland: "The Seceders believe that the most perfect form of a church is when the people choose their ministers and the State pays them."[15]

In addition to loyalty to Free Church principles and zeal for the spiritual independence of the church, there were other factors which played a part in disrupting the Canadian church. The adherents of the Free Church were active in promoting their cause in the colonies. Between 1844 and 1846 at least twenty-three deputies of the Free Church visited Canada, holding meetings, promoting discussion of Free Church principles, criticizing the establishment, and encouraging the formation of Free Church congregations.

The Established Church, confronted with the task of filling a host of vacant parishes, could not send as many deputies to present its case in the colonies, and its cause suffered accordingly. Defenders of the establishment could not muster the crusading zeal displayed by those who were convinced that in contending for the Free Church they were re-fighting the battles of the Covenanters for the crown rights of the Redeemer. One of the Church of Scotland deputies stated that at the meetings he addressed in Canada he always tried to preach the gospel, insisting that to believe this and live it is all in all.

> I try to bring men into the Church of Christ, and make the question of the Church of Scotland a secondary matter. In explaining the Church question . . . I avoid all personalities, all attacks, and give full credit to my opponents.[16]

In describing his visit to Markham he gave the following account of his message:

> The true battle is between Christ and the world—between believers and unbelievers; and that was the battle I have been fighting while preaching. But this painful and profitless combat is between Christian brethren. The Church controversy is a question on non-essentials, on meat and drink. But the "Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost".[17]

Admirable as these sentiments may be, this approach did not win converts, or allay the passions which had been aroused by the inflammatory speeches of the critics of the establishment. In the heat of controversy, courtesy, charity and moderation are not always winning assets.

Many of the Canadian ministers nursed grievances against the system of patronage as it existed in the Church of Scotland. Some of them had taken appointments to Canadian churches because they had failed to obtain a parish at home. This is not necessarily a reflection on their abilities, or zeal, or usefulness in the ministry. The system of settling ministers in parishes was one in which patient merit had sometimes to be very patient before being recognized. It was natural that such ministers should not think very kindly of an establishment which they had been trained to serve, but in which they could find no employment. Some of the Canadian ministers, too, had been reared in Secession churches in the old land. These could not be expected to feel any great attachment towards the Established Synod, nor any great reluctance in severing their ties with it.

Many of the congregations, wearied with long waiting for the settlement of a regular minister, were prepared to adhere to any branch of the Presbyterian church—Secession, Established, or Free—which would provide them with regular services. The decisive factor in every area, in determining the strength of the Free Church or the Established, was the availability of competent ministerial leadership. The Free Church grew more rapidly in succeeding years than the Established[18] because more Free Church ministers were available to supply the needs of vacant congregations. While some of the ministers of the Established church were tempted to return to vacant parishes in Scotland, surplus ministers of the Free Church were available for the supply of pulpits in Canada. One group stated to a Free Church deputy that when they were connected with the establishment they had been supplied with its dregs, and that if they retained their connection with it now, they could expect to receive only the "dregs of the dregs".[19] In localities where the established church could provide adequate ministerial leadership it maintained its old position fairly well.

As we survey the whole course of the disruption in Canada, it would appear that one of the decisive factors in the division was the pressure brought to bear on Canadian churchmen by supporters of the Free Church in Scotland. They apparently believed that it would strengthen their position at home to be able to report the support of the colonial churches. They sought, by all means within their power, to secure that support, and showed little appreciation of the difficulties confronting a colonial church.[20]

III

Because of the Free Church controversy the forces of Presbyterianism in Canada were divided for thirty-one years, in unseemly rivalry. It is possible that in some communities the rivalry between the two groups was a stimulus on both sides. It is certain that there were losses sustained through duplication of effort during the period of separation, and that wounds were made which healed but slowly. The bitterness engendered in the heat of controversy created ill-will which persisted for years, and in some instances lasted on after the union of 1875. Nearly twenty years after the disruption, a

minister in Central Ontario had to deal firmly with the dissension still existing in his community:

> The people of the Free Church when meeting our people going quietly and inoffensively to Church, often offended them by accosting them and saying, "You are going the wrong way; you should come along with us where you would hear the Gospel and get grace," etc. . . . Repeatedly from my pulpit . . . did I tell my people not to interrupt others going to their own Church, whatever that Church might be; that everyone had a right to private judgment and freedom of conscience. . . .[21]

It is highly improbable that the shouting of offensive remarks was confined to one side, or to one community. From such dissension came the hurts men carry with them to their graves. When union was proposed for the severed members of the Presbyterian churches, the opposition came chiefly from supporters of the Established Church who remembered the violent statements made by the seceders at the time of the disruption—statements which they were unable to forget, and which they were reluctant to forgive.[22]

Those who championed the cause of the Free Church at the time of the disruption in Canada were primarily concerned with theological consistency. They held strong convictions on the spiritual independence of the church and the headship of Christ, and were prepared to follow their principles to their logical conclusion, at any cost. Those who adhered to the establishment believed that the essential work of the church could be carried on effectively in the church as it was, that with patience grievances might be redressed and errors righted. They were reluctant to have the peace of the Canadian church disturbed in a dispute in which they were not directly concerned. Sacrifices made by "idealists in a hurry" might be the sacrifices of men who were martyrs by mistake.

Notes

1. For the history of the Free Church controversy in Scotland see Robert Buchanan, *The Ten Years' Conflict*, Edinburgh, 1849, 2v., or (from the point of view of the Established Church) Robert Story, *The Church of Scotland, Past and Present*, v. 3.
2. *Minutes, Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland* (hereafter referred to as C.S.), 1840, Appendix, p. 39.
3. *Minutes, C.S.*, 1841, Appendix, p. 38.
4. *Minutes, C.S.*, 1842, p. 23.
5. *Report of Proceedings of General Assembly, Free Church of Scotland*, 1843, p. 3.
6. *Minutes, C.S.*, 1843, p. 23.
7. *Loc. cit.*
8. Letter of Dr. Welsh, printed in *The Home and Foreign Missionary Record* of the Free Church of Scotland, May, 1844, p. 139.
9. *Loc. cit.*
10. *Minutes, C.S.*, 1844, p. 10.
11. A number of others seceded later, bringing the number withdrawing from the Established Synod to twenty-two.
12. *Memoir of Norman Macleod*, Toronto, 1876, p. 133.
13. *Minutes of Synod of Presbyterian Church of Canada* (hereafter referred to as P.C.), 1844, p. 35.
14. *Minutes, P.C.*, 1845, p. 41.
15. *The Presbyterian Magazine* (edited by William Proudfoot), September, 1843, p. 224.
16. *Memoir of Norman Macleod*, Toronto, 1876, p. 161.

17. *Ibid.*

18. In 1845 the Free Church lists 33 ministers and 53 pastoral charges. In 1859 this had increased to 133 ministers and 166 pastoral charges. The corresponding figures for the Church of Scotland are: 1845, 54 ministers, 73 charges: in 1859, 73 ministers, 84 charges.

19. Report of Mr. Bonar, *Home and Foreign Record of Free Church of Scotland,* November, 1845, p. 240.

20. The Synod of Australia at its meeting in 1844 resolved to maintain a position of neutrality. The following year it identified itself with the Free Church. In 1846 it reversed its decision and identified itself with the Established Church. The Presbyterian Church in Nova Scotia allied itself almost unanimously with the Free Church, and the Church of New Brunswick remained in connection with the Church of Scotland. Three ministers withdrew to form a Free Church.

21. Letter of the Rev. John McMurchy in *The Presbyterian,* 1862, p. 300.

22. A number of congregations remained out of the Union of 1875, retaining their connection with the Church of Scotland. The *Presbyterian Handbook* of 1883 states that there were seven ministers and their congregations at that time in connection with the Church of Scotland, as well as two presbyteries in the Synod of Nova Scotia. The difficulty of obtaining ministers ultimately compelled most of these to enter the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

A New Theory of Apostolic Succession

R. F. HETTLINGER

AMONG the few general agreements reached in the course of the long and continuing debate on apostolic succession has been the conclusion that the earliest *doctrine* of episcopal succession affirms a continuity of teaching office rather than of sacramental grace. C. H. Turner in a famous essay thus described the idea of succession held by Irenaeus:

> The bishop of any Christian church is the head and representative of his flock, and has been regularly and openly put into possession of the *cathedra* or teaching chair, in succession to a predecessor who had in turn been recognized in his time as the one proper possessor of the chair—and so on right back to the foundation of the particular local church.[1]

It is characteristic of this early period that the bishop traces his succession not (as in later Western practice) through the bishops who consecrated him but through his predecessors in office. As Dr. A. J. Mason pointed out in the same volume, Irenaeus conceived of truth as abiding in the whole Church, "not in the line of bishops who govern it", although they are "the representatives of their Churches, and the responsible guardians of their traditions".[2] In more recent years Dom Gregory Dix acknowledged that "There is in this way of reckoning the matter no emphasis whatever on the *sacramental* 'succession' of a bishop to those bishops from other Churches who had consecrated him to the episcopate by the laying on of hands".[3] The point at which the later conception of succession, in which the bishop is regarded as the recipient of a special *charisma* for government or for sacramental validity, replaced the more primitive idea is still a matter of disagreement among scholars, although most authorities agree that some such change took place in the latter years of the second century or in the first quarter of the third.[4] The importance of this change of emphasis has also been variously estimated. Dom Gregory Dix maintained that the absence of a sacramental theory of succession from the earliest formulations did not affect the case of those who believe that episcopal succession is essential to the existence of the Church, and declared that the doctrine which came to be accepted later "was only a novelty in that it emphasized a different set of pre-existing facts".[5] Others, including the present writer,[6] have argued that the absence of this doctrine from the apostolic and sub-apostolic ages shows that the traditional catholic dogma of apostolic succession—however vital as one element in the fullness of Christian unity—cannot be made a test of the orthodoxy and validity of non-episcopal Churches and ministries.

In a recent important book, *The Apostolic Succession in the First Two Centuries of the Church* (Lutterworth Press, London, 1953) Dr. Arnold

Ehrhardt has propounded a new and interesting thesis. He claims that the idea of continuity of episcopal teachers, by which Irenaeus sought to demonstrate the authority and unity of the catholic faith over against Gnostic distortions, was not the earliest Christian conception of episcopal succession. Another view, which was "fully established" by the time of Clement of Rome (p. 77),[7] was based upon "the unshakable conviction among the members of the Church at Jerusalem that an unbroken succession after the Jewish High Priests was essential for the New Israel, the Church" (p. 81). In Dr. Ehrhardt's judgment the earliest idea of succession was not concerned with teaching and doctrine but with sacerdotal functions. "The priesthood was at the root of the Apostolic succession. . . . The doctrine owed its impetus to the necessity of continuing the sacerdotal ministry of the Old Israel within the New Israel, the Church" (pp. 81-2). It is obvious that this thesis, if substantiated, will have important consequences for the modern discussion of the doctrine of the ministry.

Dr. Ehrhardt, after an interesting discussion of the Biblical evidence for succession, to which we shall refer again, comes in the second chapter to the most original part of his study. He examines in turn the various types of succession lists known to us from Jewish and secular sources, and reminds us that the idea of succession is by no means a peculiarly Christian tenet. In pagan society lists were made of royal successions, of appointed officers, and of the heads of various philosophical schools. None of these, argues Dr. Ehrhardt, could have supplied the pattern for the Christian episcopal lists which began to be drawn up in the second half of the second century. Unlike the Christian lists the pagan parallels either include the dates of succession, refer to regular (usually annual) appointment, or imply a progress of philosophical research (pp. 43-4). Of the four Jewish types, the rabbinic lists provide no parallel because they insist on succession in pairs and record the contributions of *new* knowledge made by each generation of rabbis (p. 46). The Jewish prophetic lists do have a parallel in the Church, but it is the Christian prophets rather than the bishops who correspond thereto, and "it is improbable that episcopal and prophetical succession lists should have sprung from the same root" (p. 47). This leaves us with the combined lists of Jewish royal and sacerdotal successions, which are "the only type that can have been followed by the episcopal succession lists" (p. 48). In a closely reasoned argument, which I must leave to more expert patristic scholars to scrutinize, Dr. Ehrhardt then proceeds to show that Hippolytus was well acquainted with such succession lists and that he connected them in thought with the Christian succession of bishops (pp. 48-61).

If we accept, for the moment, the validity of this argument as applied to Hippolytus, the question remains: What evidence is there of this doctrine of succession before the beginning of the third century? While Dr. Ehrhardt's researches may have supplied us with important new evidence as to the origin of Hippolytus's teaching, it is not news that this writer held

a sacramental-sacerdotal view of succession. It is at this point that Dr. Ehrhardt seems to me to have failed in establishing his thesis. We will look at the evidence in turn, working back from the end of the second century to the New Testament.

1. *Hegesippus.* In a famous passage Eusebius quotes Hegesippus (*ca.* A.D. 175) as writing:

> Together with the apostles James the Lord's brother succeeded to the Church. He received the name of 'the Just' from all men, from the time of the Lord even to our own; for there were many called James. Now he was holy from his mother's womb, drank no wine nor strong drink, nor ate anything in which was life; no razor came upon his head, he anointed himself not with oil and used no bath. To him alone it was permitted to enter the holy place; for he wore nothing woollen, but linen garments. And alone he entered into the sanctuary, and was found on his knees asking forgiveness on behalf of the people, so that his knees became hard like a camel's, for he was continually bending the knee in worship to God, and asking forgiveness for the people.[8]

Dr. Ehrhardt understands this to mean that "Hegesippus saw in St. James the true successor of the High Priest" (p. 64) and concludes that both he and Eusebius saw in James the link between the High-priestly succession of the Jewish nation and the episcopal succession of the Church (p. 65). But, quite apart from the obscurity of the passage which seems to intermingle literal description and allegory,[9] there is no indication that Hegesippus regarded the episcopal succession as a whole as sacerdotal. Indeed, Dr. Ehrhardt's own argument tells against him here. As we noted above, he draws a radical distinction between the pagan type of succession list which was concerned with philosophical teachers and the Jewish lists of high-priests. The former type, he maintains, is introduced by Irenaeus as the result of the assimilation of the Jewish-Christian succession doctrine to "a scholarly interest in the genealogy of the Christian doctrine which was *largely historical and purely human*" (p. 115, my italics).[10] But in this case Hegesippus cannot be claimed as a witness to the undefiled sacerdotal succession theme, for in the passage in which he speaks of the continuing succession of the Church it is precisely *as a succession of true teaching that he understands it*:

> And the church of the Corinthians continued in the true doctrine until Primus was bishop at Corinth. . . . But when I came to Rome, I made for myself a succession-list as far as Anicetus. . . . And in every succession and in every city that which the Law and the Prophets and the Lord preach is faithfully followed.[11]

There is here no suggestion of priestly succession in the episcopate. The fact (if accepted) that Hegesippus thought of James as a Christian priest cannot of itself justify the claim that Hegesippus believed in an extension of that priesthood through episcopal succession. Even Tertullian, who was the first writer explicitly to name the bishop "high priest" (*summus sacerdos*),[12] does not seem to have connected the ideals of apostolic succession

and priesthood: "[The Churches] since they agree in the same faith . . . are accounted as not less apostolic [than those founded by Apostles], because they are akin in doctrine."[13]

2. *The Clementine Homilies.* These pseudonymous writings, says Dr. Ehrhardt, "have the Apostolic succession very much at heart" and exalt St. James above the other Apostles "because he was seen as Christ's successor in His priestly ministry" (pp. 72-3). The latter assumption is based, however, only on the precarious inference that since the Homilies compare Christ to Moses they would naturally draw an analogy between Aaron and "the brother of Christ". But as a matter of fact the Homilies do not make this connection explicitly, and, as Ehrhardt recognises, St. James did not play any great part in the sources which underlie this document (p. 73).[14] As far as I have been able to discover, the Clementine Homilies, despite the fact that they "outstrip the most rigid orthodoxy in their respect for the episcopal office",[15] do not ascribe any special priesthood to the bishop; and in any case their heterodoxy and the uncertainty of their date make them doubtful evidence for the teaching of the Church in the second century.

3. The evidence of *Clement of Rome* comes nearest to substantiating Dr. Ehrhardt's position. Without using the word "succession" Clement does clearly imply some intention on the part of the Apostles for the regular continuance of the ministry in the Church.[16] Moreover, Clement does speak of the "offering of the gifts of the bishop's office",[17] and in chapters 40-43 he draws a comparison between the necessity for order and authority in the Old Testament dispensation and in the Church. Dr. Ehrhardt takes it for granted that Clement means that "the ministry of the Church was the continuation of that of the priests and Levites in Israel" (p. 78); but in doing so he entirely ignores the weighty reasons given by Lightfoot for supposing that "this is an instance from the old dispensation adduced to show that God will have his ministrations performed through definite persons . . . [in which there is] no direct reference but an argument by analogy".[18] Clement uses other illustrations of authority, including that of the leadership of the Roman army,[19] but nobody supposes therefore that he regarded the Christian ministry as directly corresponding to "prefects, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds and rulers of fifties". All that he means is that the Christian Church has its properly authorized leaders just as the Jewish people and the Roman army have theirs. Again, if Clement did intend a more direct comparison between the Old Testament ministry and the Christian succession, who corresponded in Rome or Corinth to the High Priest? Not the bishop, because neither place at that time had a monepiscopal constitution. Clement gives his own answer in chapter 36: "Jesus Christ the High-priest of our offerings." The claim that Clement used the doctrine of sacerdotal succession "clearly and competently, as a well established tenet of the Christian faith" (p. 77) proves on examination to be highly questionable.

4. *The New Testament.* Dr. Ehrhardt recognises that direct New Testament support for his thesis is not forthcoming, but he attempts to show that from the first sacerdotal associations formed around the episcopate. He points out that *Codex Bezae*[20] pictures St. James in Acts as having precedence over all other Apostles, and from this goes on to conclude (what neither *Codex Bezae* nor the original text of Acts explicitly suggests) that, "If on the one hand, the form of the court of St. James at Jerusalem reflected that of the Jewish High Priest, it is also true that it seemed to foreshadow that of a bishop in the early Catholic Church" (p. 30). In a round-about way it is suggested that since the Presbyters in Jerusalem formed part of the Sanhedrin, of which the High Priest was head, the use of the word for the Christian minister carries sacerdotal over-tones (pp. 27-8). Most remarkable of all, however, is the argument (put forward as a hypothesis on p. 79, but accepted as a premise on p. 107) that in addressing the Seven Churches through their "angels" the writer of the Apocalypse associates the bishop and the high priest because "the Jewish High Priest was regarded as the *mal'ak*, the angel of God". Lightfoot's careful refutation of the identification of the "angels" and the bishops is ignored.[21]

The Apostolic Succession serves a useful purpose in reminding us of the great importance attached to St. James in the early Church. It contains an invaluable discussion (Chapter 4) of the relation between prophetic and other ministries in the second century. It brings together a great deal of important evidence on the early doctrine of priesthood. But I find myself quite unconvinced by its major thesis. The author's use of his material can only be described as over-imaginative.[22] The impression is given that he first arrived at a hypothesis (based on the use by Hippolytus of the High-priestly succession lists) and then set out to substantiate it by whatever evidence, however slight, existed. Thus, if either St. James, episcopacy, priesthood or succession is mentioned in his source, Dr. Ehrhardt seems to take it for granted that the other three elements of the quartet are in the writer's mind.[23] But this is to assume what is being proved. On the other hand, Dr. Ehrhardt does not claim that the conception of episcopal succession as sacerdotal was universally accepted in the early Church. He is not, even if his thesis is accepted, a supporter of the rigid doctrine of the necessity for episcopal ordination. He rejects the *shaliach* theory of *The Apostolic Ministry* (pp. 11-20) and does not believe that apostolic succession was generally taught by the New Testament writers (p. 35). Even in the second century there was no settled theory of succession in some Churches of Asia Minor (p. 66), and the Didache, Ignatius, Polycarp and Hermas were ignorant of any such doctrine (pp. 76-7). Dr. Ehrhardt believes that, even where the doctrine was held, the agents of ordination were sometimes the presbyters of the local church rather than visiting bishops (preface),[24] and in some cases enthronement rather than laying-on-of-hands was the "constitutive act" of ordination (p. 82). How, then, did the dogma of episcopal succession which originated in "the constitution of the Church

of Jerusalem" (p. 21) and with "the circle round St. James and his successors of the circumcision" (p. 82) gain such general authority in the Church of the third century? Dr. Ehrhardt's conclusion in this respect deserves more serious consideration than his claim that the doctrine originated in the apostolic age:

the scales were tipped in favour of its acceptance first by the Montanist crisis, which stayed the hand of the Church in Asia Minor, and secondly by the exertions of that very remarkable man Hegesippus, the author of the Roman succession list [p. 81].

Notes

1. *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry* (ed. Swete), p. 105.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 46–47.
3. *The Apostolic Ministry* (ed. Kirk), p. 202.
4. In a footnote (54) on p. 74 of *Episcopacy and Reunion* (Fairweather and Hettlinger), I have pointed out the dangers of any dogmatic assertion of the precise point at which the transition occurs.
5. *The Apostolic Ministry*, p. 212.
6. *Episcopacy and Reunion*, pp. 75–81. For another recent discussion of the early patristic evidence which leads the writer to similar conclusions, see K. J. Woollcombe, 'The Ministry and the Order of the Church in the Works of the Fathers', chapter III in *The Historic Episcopate* (ed. Carey).
7. Oddly enough this statement is contradicted in the preface, which states that the belief in Apostolic Succession as a doctrine belongs only to the second century.
8. *Ecclesiastical History*, II.23.4–6.
9. Is it possible that Hegesippus, who, although a Palestinian, cannot have had first-hand knowledge of Jewish practice before the destruction of Jerusalem, supposed that James was actually a *Jewish* priest? If he means only that James was a Christian priest, the reference to the holy place and the sanctuary in close association with the use of linen garments etc. seems quite anachronistic. Of course, if the meaning is that James was a Jewish priest, the conclusion drawn by Dr. Ehrhardt for the whole Christian ministry are even less justified.
10. Cf. p. 159 where the conception of a succession of Christian teachers is said to be "partly dependent on pagan models". Dr. Ehrhardt's treatment of Irenaeus is difficult to follow. He acknowledges that Irenaeus does not expressly state that the Christian ministry continues the O. T. priesthood (p. 122). But on pp. 120-1, by arguing that when Irenaeus quotes Isa. 60: 17 he intends it to be understood as if it were Deut. 17: 9, 10 (an entirely gratuitous assumption), he is able to conclude that Irenaeus demands obedience to the bishop "because of his priesthood".
11. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, IV.22.2, 3.
12. *On Baptism*, 17.
13. *The Prescription against Heretics*, 32. Cf. also 20, 21. Ehrhardt quotes two passages in support of the view that Tertullian "stated quite plainly that the Apostolic succession was the continuation of the Levitical priesthood" (p. 128). But the first (*Against Marcion*, 4.23) does not necessarily imply any more than that the Christian priest is not to concern himself with the affairs of the world (i.e. burying the dead) as the Jewish priest was forbidden to have contact with the dead; and the second (*On Monogamy*, 7) occurs in a Montanist work which implies that all Christians are priests.
14. The present text of the Homilies dates from the late fourth century, although it certainly incorporates second century material.
15. Lightfoot, *Dissertation on the Christian Ministry*, p. 211.
16. *The Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 44. What the relation of the various parties mentioned is to each other remains a matter of debate (see *The Historic Episcopate*, pp. 42–7); but whatever the answer to this question is, it cannot be that suggested by Ehrhardt. He writes that Clement "asserts that the Apostles had established a law—or made a will—concerning the succession to their ministry (*leitourgia*, 44.2), and says that the successors had been ordained by the Apostles or by other 'eminent men'" (p. 77). Apart from the inaccuracy of assuming that *katestesan* means "ordained", this is impossible. If the *leitourgia* is (as Ehrhardt assumes) that of the *Apostles* (and not of the bishops and deacons) those who succeeded to it were not "ordained by the Apostles or by other eminent men"—they were themselves the eminent men who had appointed the later bishops at Corinth!

17. *Loc. cit.*
18. *The Apostolic Fathers,* I.ii.123.
19. Chapter 37.
20. Ehrhardt does not claim that *Codex Bezae* reflects the original text of Acts, but that it expresses a partisan view in favour of the Church at Jerusalem "not more than a century after the event" (p 28).
21. *Dissertation on the Christian Ministry,* pp. 199–200.
22. The suspicion of a certain irresponsiblity in the use of texts is confirmed by an example in an article contributed by Ehrhardt to *The Church Quarterly Review,* July-September, 1945. He there discovers evidence in Ignatius that "The Christian ministry is essentially the continuation of the Jewish priesthood" (p. 119), on the ground that "he exhorts the Christians to be obedient to the bishop as to the Decalogue (*Trall,* 13: 1) for, says Mal.ii.7, 'they should seek the law at his mouth' ". But (1) it is extremely doubtful whether *entole* here means "the Decalogue" (see Lightfoot *in loc.*); (2) Ignatius neither here nor elsewhere quotes Mal.ii.7; (3) without some explicit indication there is no reason why a reference to "the Law" (if it exists here) should carry sacerdotal associations; after all, the Law was given through Moses, who was not a priest but a prophet (Deut. 34: 10)!
23. On page 74 this underlying tendency is made partly explicit: "The pseudo-Clementines illustrate the mind of the early Catholic Church in the Roman province of Syria. It is clear that the influences of early Jewish-Christian thought played here a very important part. The prominence of St. James as well as the use of the title of *archon* for the bishop makes it clear; and *it is also evident that the idea of the Apostolic succession belongs to the same body of opinion.*" No evidence is produced to give independent justification to the words I have italicized.
24. Ehrhardt accepts the conclusions of Dr. W. Telfer that in Egypt bishops were consecrated by presbyters until the middle of the third century (*Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* III.1).

Psalm 103: God is Love. He will have Mercy and Abundantly Pardon

N. H. PARKER

PSALM 103 is one of the Old Testament's sublimest utterances on a theme which is basic to both Judaism and Christianity, namely that God is love and in all of his dealings with men that love is manifest. Such a doctrine did not spring up spontaneously; it was the product of profound reflection upon history and personal experience. Nor did the prophets do all the thinking. Psalmists and priests also did their part.

Hermann Gunkel, pioneer of form criticism in the Old Testament,[1] has demonstrated that all except a few of the Hebrew psalms can be traced to a *Sitz im Leben* related to the cultic worship of ancient Israel, some having served the whole congregation when it worshipped as a nation and some the individuals who worshipped alone or with their families and immediate friends, being concerned in their devotions with intensely personal confession, petition, thanksgiving, or protestation of innocence. Gunkel places No. 103 amongst national hymns of thanksgiving, and no doubt it was often so used, but most commentators, even amongst his loyal disciples, feel obliged to discuss it as an individual utterance. Professor Elmer A. Leslie, than whom none could be more faithful to a master, makes peace with the ghost of Gunkel by assuming that the psalm was sung by a soloist as a part of congregational worship.[2] Perhaps so, but more probably it was prescribed as a solo for only those individuals who, while at the temple on festal pilgrimage, took opportunity to fulfil vows of thanksgiving previously planned. The completion of such vows involved sacrifices of some kind, along with suitable prayers and hymns, all of which required the assistance of a priest. It is improbable that many such pilgrims were competent to compose their own litanies, but as good pastors the priests were ready to provide each with a suitable liturgy and assist him in it. No doubt this psalm was often prescribed as an individual hymn of thanksgiving for healing and forgiveness. In brief, it formed part of a Hebrew "Book of Common Order" which apparently represented a combination of prayerbook and hymnary. It was there because of its fidelity to the best in religious experience and because it had been canonized by the judgment of wise and godly men.

So much for the usage whereby the psalm was preserved. How did it originate? Who composed it and why? Exegesis ultimately demands the sincere attempt to become *en rapport* with an author, and no amount of talk about *Gattungen* can obviate that necessity. Witness Fleming James's title *Thirty Psalmists*, not *Thirty Psalms*. In religion, as in patriotism, manners, aesthetics, and all other aspirations of the human spirit, the

current runs from the noble individual to the group, not contrariwise. The Church at its best aspires to the faith of its choice saints at their best. Religion may be the deposit of a widespread common experience, and creeds may be composed by councils, but no hymn was ever "sired by a syndicate". Poems are written by individuals, and the great poets are those who, while speaking for themselves, speak also for the universal soul of man. Professor Samuel Terrien[3] holds the author of Ps. 103 to be an un-creative thinker, while I myself would say that he was definitely creative although not necessarily original. One can be creative without being original. Obviously he drew upon extraneous sources. He paraphrased a couplet from II Isaiah—unless it was the other way round, for priority in literary dependence is difficult to determine with finality—while both he and II Isaiah were apparently indebted for the metaphors about human frailty to Ps. 90; he was familiar with the Genesis accounts of creation, the fall of man, and the flood; and he was quite probably influenced by prophetic teaching on the subject of divine mercy.[4] Yet, true religion is such that it must be indigenous to all saints; otherwise we preachers are merely repeating what our ears have heard.

The major premise in this psalm is that God is like a father. He forgives and redeems his erring people. He is not an arbitrary, relentless administrator of justice meting out to men the precise retribution appropriate to their misdeeds. His judgment seat is a mercy seat where those who fear him are dealt with in loving kindness. He makes himself known by redemptive acts in history and in the personal experience of his saints. But not everybody in ancient Israel agreed with that proposition. There was no want of men, whenever the national spirit or the spirit of any individual saint was distressed, to insist on the basis of "strong Biblical evidence" that God was inexorably relentless in the visitation of their iniquity upon all who displeased him.[5] Concerning such radiant faith Kittel has this to say, and he is right: "What this acknowledgement means we cannot realize till we consider how strongly on the whole in the religion of the Old Testament the fear of the destroying might of Yahweh predominated over trust in his goodness."[6] And Terrien aptly says this: "In words which shoot a glimpse of the Gospel in (*sic*) the Old Testament the poet achieves nothing less than an epigrammatic creed; he explains the essentials of divinity (vv. 11, 12) and uncovers the supreme mystery of the Godhead."[7]

Incidentally, this psalm becomes the more remarkable if we remember that it may have been written by a priest and was certainly used by priests in cultic worship. Now it was priests above all others who magnified the terrible holiness of God which made him so implacably intolerant of offences against his dignity. But here, in and by means of psalms like this, we have priests making sure that Israel's religion does not come to rest in a settled conviction that the ways of God with erring men are best revealed in stories like those of Nadab and Abihu, Dathan and Abiram, the seventy curious men of Bethshemesh, or the watchful Uzzah who died beside the

ark at the threshing floor of Nacon when the oxen stumbled.[8] This is not to say that the priests treated sin lightly, but that they desired to present God as father rather than judge and treated men as sons first and as sinners afterward.

The psalm falls naturally into the following divisions wherein each major thought suggests its successor in a chain of ideas.

I. Personal reason for thanksgiving: pardon, healing, restoration to a full, rich life, vv. 1-5.
II. God's goodness also manifest in Israel's history, vv. 6-10.
III. God is like a father; and as Creator he sympathizes with man's limitations, vv. 11-14.
IV. Man is ephemeral but God endures; therefore divine love and care are assured to all generations, vv. 15-18.
V. A doxology in which all creation is summoned to the praise of God, vv. 19-21.

Vv. 1-5 explain why the psalm was written. The author had recently recovered from a serious illness in which, "like a true Hebrew",[9] he had recognized the rebuke and chastisement of God. Fully restored to bodily vigor and mental peace he betook himself to the sanctuary for formal thanksgiving, but being a poet in his own right he composed his own hymn, which so pleased the priests in charge that they added it to their collection.

To address one's soul is merely a Hebrew device for addressing oneself—which some languages do not possess. The word *nephesh* has been well described as "a pronoun at large". "All that is within me" is an elaboration upon "soul", the whole complex of psychological functions attributed to the vital organs called "covered" or "hidden" parts in Ps. 51: 8. "Benefits" (v.2) comes from the same verb (*gamal*) as does "rewarded" in v.9. It involves the idea of reciprocity in which one person's act is conditioned by another's, whether these be gracious or ungracious. Both shades of meaning are present in I Sam. 24: 17. The word "forgive" (*salach*) in v.3 is used only of divine pardon prompted by divine grace. It suggests restoration to favor, the putting of all memory of offence out of mind and implies no necessity for atonement or expiation. Forgiveness and healing are equated by the parallelism here because even the most devout looked upon disease as divine chastisement, however mysterious. "Redeem" in v.4 involves the verb *ga'al,* "to play the part of next of kin", a noble and cherished ideal of Hebrew society. It appears in Job 19: 2, but here it is coupled with *chesedh* (Cf. Hos. 6: 6; Micah 6: 8) which denotes the deathless devotion of a blood-kinsman. R. S. V. translates *chesedh* by "steadfast love", which is at least better than "loving kindness". "Tender mercy" turns on the Hebrew term *racham*, commonly (but badly) translated by "pity". It denotes the feeling of a mother for her child and is cognate with the term *rechem,* "womb". "Destruction" or "the pit" simply denotes death, which no Hebrew seemed to fear as the normal consequence of old age but which

all resented when it came untimely. As a healer God rescues his own from death, which would rob him of them. "To satisfy with good things" suggests the provision of a rich and happy life. The Hebrew is obscure but the sense is clear.

The recitation of his personal experiences reminds the saint that God has dealt similarly with the nation as a whole. Thanks to the Hebrew instinct for a feeling of "corporate personality" his mind fluctuated naturally between personal and national experiences. Not for one only, but for *all* in covenant relationship with him (cf. v.18) God "does righteousness". "To do righteousness" suggests ethical conduct, especially as fidelity toward one's own, but in usage the idea runs over into that of goodness, mercy, and kindness. "Justice for all the oppressed" implies deliverance for the victims and retribution for the offenders. The author is probably thinking of Hebrew history as well as of divine providence in personal cases. To Moses and to Israel ever afterward God has made known his "ways" and his "works", i.e., has revealed what he *is* and what he *does* through great redemptive acts. This is what Professor Ernest Wright delights to call "theology as recital".[10] V.8 contains an extremely strong affirmation of God's graciousness as opposed to arbitrary justice and of his fidelity to his own. There again we have those words *chesedh* and *racham* (cf. on v.4), but with them another, *chanan,* which means "to be gracious", "to show favor", and a graphic idiom, *'erekh appayim,* which means "patient", "slow to become angry". Strangely enough, the much abused word "love" (*'ahabh*) does not occur in the psalm. The Hebrews preferred *racham*, for which we seem to have no perfect translation. Our English "chide" misses the point in v.9 where the Hebrew *ribh* suggests the relentless pressing of a charge in court (cf. Micah 6: 1, 2; Jer. 25: 31). God is not the kind who demands "the last farthing" (Matt. 5: 26). Vv. 10f. emphatically state that man's sinfulness is not the measure of God's mercy. He does not repay us "tit for tat". (Observe the word *gamal* again. Cf. on v.2, and cf. Rom. 12: 17.) On the contrary, God's steadfast love is more like the overarching heavens above the earth or like the waters of the flood which "prevailed" over the earth. Note an allusion to the flood in the use of *gabhar,* the same word that occurs in Gen. 17: 18,19. However, God's grace is at least partially conditioned by the attitude of man in that it is effective only for such as "fear" him, i.e., those who reverence and serve him.[11] In v.14 we have a lovely allusion to the older creation story (Gen. 2: 7). He who himself formed us out of dust is not apt to forget the limitations from which we suffer (cf. Job 10: 8-13; 14: 15). God soon discovered in Eden that the man he had made was weak.

But the excursus into history and the story of Creation forcibly reminded the poet of the brevity and frailty of human life in contrast to the eternity of God; hence the adaptation of a couplet which occurs also in Isa. 40: 6, and which probably originated in different form with Ps. 90. "As for man, his days are as grass." Did not God say to man when he was expelled from

Eden, "Dust thou art and to dust shalt thou return"? Yes, but even at the gate of Eden judgment was tempered with mercy; so, let us not forget the rainbow cast by that mercy upon the dark cloud of human sin and failure. Hence, "The steadfast love of God endures forever". The author of Ps. 90 forgot his rainbow completely and the prophet, as might be expected, made the *word* of God endure forever; but this man is thinking of how God deals with sinners whom he loves. His *steadfast love* endures forever. Although "brief life is here our portion", we enjoy divine compassion and the same is sure for our children to all generations.

Vv. 19-21 require no special consideration beyond the observation that such doxologies were a favorite technique with psalmists. The allusion to God as king in heaven is quite common in cultic hymns, especially those used at the Feast of Tabernacles.[12] Heaven is bidden to unite with earth in the praise of God's goodness. There is warrant in the New Testament for the thought that the praise of grateful men is blended with that of the heavenly host (Rev. 4: 4-11). We find a similar but more elaborate doxology in Ps. 148.

Finally, some homiletical and practical observations:

1. Ultimately all religion goes back to personal experience. Whoever speaks in the name of religion should begin by addressing himself and should hear in response his own soul's "Amen". Moreover, if it be *true* religion it must turn upon experience with the *goodness of God,* for he who has not known God in his goodness has not known God as he really is. Here, of course, the Gospels take precedence as religious literature over even the prophets and the psalmists.

2. For all that is tragic in history because of the sinfulness of men, there is much of the sublime and it springs from God's self-revelation in history as a redeemer. Such a revelation can be appreciated only by the backward look, and even then only the eye of faith can see it.[13]

3. It is not enough to think of God as Creator, sovereign Lord, or judge alone. It is imperative for our spiritual peace that we know him as Father as revealed in Jesus Christ. That is not to make sin less but more, for sin against a father is worse than any offence against authority based upon impersonal relationships. Sin against a father is sin against love; yet sin against love is the only sin that can be forgiven. Many words and phrases in Ps. 103 are calculated to show that our religion is grounded, just as Jesus maintained that it was, in those relationships which make the family. The cross of Christ itself has significance only in the light of what the psalmist calls *chesedh*, that steadfast loyalty which prevails within the bonds of kinship.

4. The one real antidote for despair over the frailty and futility of human life is a sound conviction of the eternity and unfailing constancy of the steadfast love of God. Only through such a faith can we leave the unseen future in his hands. The psalmist had no clear conception of a life after death with God, such as the Christian has; yet, apart from the offices of

Christ, the Christian's faith is the same as his. We cannot drift beyond the love and care of "him who holdeth our soul in life".

5. Religious optimism is largely the by-product of simple gratitude. Blessed is he who has a gift for gratitude, who can "count his blessings". That is the sovereign catalyst which reduces all experience and all reflection to worship.

Notes

1. H. Gunkel, *Ausgewählte Psalmen*; and *Die Psalmen*. H. Gunkel and J. Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*. For a short explanation of form criticism in the Psalter cf. Adam Welch, *The Psalter in Life, Worship and History*, and for a complete survey of the literature A. R. Johnson, *The Psalms* in *The O. T. and Modern Study* (H. H. Rowley, ed.).

2. *The Psalms*, p. 46. But, according to *Tractate Sopherim*, XIX, 2, Psalm 103 was customarily used in the early Christian Era for the Day of Atonement—in which case it would have been a congregational hymn. Vv. 15–17 are heard at every Jewish funeral service.

3. *The Psalms and their Meaning for Today*, p. 207.

4. Cf., for example, Hos. 11; Isa. 55; Jer. 3. Numerous other references could be cited.

5. Only a few of innumerable references can be cited. Cf. Ex. 32:25–35; Num. 14:28–30; 25:1–9; I Sam. 3:14; 15:1–16:13; II Sam. 21:1–14; II Chron. 24; Ps. 106; Isa. 1:21–31; Jer. 15:1–13; Amos 1:1–2:16.

6. Quoted by Fleming James in *Thirty Psalmists*, p. 48.

7. *Op. cit.*, p. 208.

8. Lev. 10; Num. 16; I Sam. 6:19; II Sam. 6:6–8.

9. Fleming James, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

10. *God Who Acts*, Ch. I.

11. I understand "the fear of the Lord" as a comprehensive term covering all that goes to make up a proper attitude toward God.

12. The Feast of Tabernacles coincided with the beginning of the new year, at which time it was apparently customary to celebrate the annual enthronement of Yahweh as Lord of Creation. For most convenient references cf. A. R. Johnson, *The Rôle of the King in the Jerusalem Cultus*, Ch. III in S. H. Hooke (ed.), *The Labyrinth*, or introduction to Leslie's *The Psalms*, and James's *Thirty Psalmists*, or Ch. VII in W. O. E. Oesterley's *The Psalms*, Vol. I.

13. As an excellent modern illustration of historians who can discern the hand of God, cf. Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity and History*.

Book Reviews

The Life and Ministry of Jesus. By VINCENT TAYLOR. London: Macmillan, 1954. Pp. xii and 236. $2.50.

THIS slim volume is essentially an expansion of an essay contributed to the *Interpreter's Bible* in 1951, although the material has been worked over for lectures later delivered at Oxford and Cardiff. The Prolegomena is new and in its six very brief sections the author discusses whether a Life of Christ is possible, our Sources, and the historical value of the Gospels. He chooses to follow the framework of Mark, supplementing it from the special sources of Luke and Matthew and, occasionally, from John (but he is cautious in admitting credence to the historical portions of John). He does not attempt to expound the Teaching of Jesus, except as it bears on the course of events. As might be expected, Form Criticism is not dismissed entirely, as the fashion is among other British scholars; nor is he enamoured of the Hebert-Farrer Typology school, which is more popular in Britain than it deserves to be. Dr. Taylor rightly says that a figure like the Jesus portrayed by Schweitzer could never have exercised the influence on the world that our Lord has; his criticism of the so-called Ecclesiastical Lives is that in them a divine being is pictured "who wears his humanity like a mask". He does well to make these criticisms and to defend a reverent, liberal approach to the documents of the New Testament. For there is grave danger that resurgent fundamentalist evangelicalism is resulting in a Biblicism that threatens to lose the human Jesus altogether. Docetic heresy remains a heresy.

The outline of Jesus' life and ministry as it is given in this book need not be discussed in detail, but attention should be drawn to a few important points.

Dr. Taylor thinks that the Twelve were appointed at a crisis and for a purely temporary function. At this period Jesus looked for the speedy coming of the Kingdom. The disciples were indeed successful (in exorcisms, for example), but neither they nor the Galileans desired the kind of Kingdom Jesus did. The mission was a failure and the true Kingdom was not established. Not long after, Jesus withdrew from Galilee to Tyre, and he went alone; because he had to face the prospect that a "Son of Man" who was the Servant of the Father must suffer.

This position is to be welcomed as a reaction against the fairly popular modern view that Jesus foresaw his suffering and death even at his Baptism. What room is left for his development in that case? how can we make sense of his true humanity and his appeal to Galilee and Judea? The sooner he died the better! But surely Jesus began his ministry with some hope of success.

Dr. Taylor inclines strongly to accept the evidence of the Fourth Gospel that Jesus withdrew from Jerusalem after a considerable ministry there following his journey from the North. Once more it was a false popularity that compelled him to leave and to ponder the secret of a Messiah's (and a Son's) suffering. Hence there were three decisive moments of retreat in the ministry: at the Temptation; after the Mission of the Twelve; and after his own Mission to Jerusalem that ended with the claim to destroy the Temple and build another in three days. (The vital importance of this attack on the Temple is well emphasised.)

John's date for the Last Supper is accepted, but it remains rather uncertain whether the meal is to be taken as an anticipation of the Passover or as a unique Messianic feast.

There is a valuable discussion of the "Son of Man" and the teaching about his "Coming". Our author believes that the title "Son of Man" is both personal and communal, now one aspect predominating and now another. Towards the end it is the personal that controls the words of Jesus, who realises that he is himself the Son of Man *par excellence*. "He must needs have thought of his Parousia in glory", yet this must not rule out the social aspect: his victory will be the victory of the People of the Saints of the Most High. At his Coming, the Kingdom of God will come with power. Thus we are to see both present and future emphases in the teaching about the Kingdom: it was realised, as C. H. Dodd argues, in the ministry of Jesus Christ; but it has not yet come with the fullness of power and victory. Jesus expected his Coming shortly after his death; and he was mistaken. (Conservative readers will not like that!) The primitive Church had a radiant longing for the Parousia because Jesus had said something to encourage this, though his teaching is greatly confused by its synthesis in the apocalyptic doctrine of the Church. We too in our own day are encouraged by Dr. Taylor to await the Coming, without knowing either the date or the manner of it. I am inclined to think that this is not a very adequate answer to the problem of re-interpretation that is so necessary at this time of eschatological fever.

Pious Christians believe that critical examination of all Gospel narratives is dangerous; how much more so in the case of the Resurrection stories! Dr. Taylor, as a devout Liberal, will displease them. For he thinks that the stories are late and contain legends. The best arguments for the Resurrection, he affirms, are now as ever the transformation of the disciples; the conversion and work of Paul; the existence and continued life of the Church; and an individual's experience of Christ as a living and risen Lord.

The book is always interesting as an example of a Liberalism that remains truly devout and acknowledges Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Lord and Saviour. It is cautious, but critical. It is backed by the sound scholarship of a veteran New Testament scholar who must always be heard with respect. But in some ways it is too critical, considering its scale: for example,

the reference to Albertz on page 52 in support of the theory that the narrative of the Temptations comes from Jesus himself is gratuitous. This was long the prevailing opinion of the Church. Need we bring in this modern as sufficient witness? Or again, is it enough to tell us that Ernst Percy interprets Luke 14: 27 literally? Scholars will know who Percy is and when he wrote; but will the ordinary reader? From the expert's point of view, then, the book is hardly critical enough. It falls between two stools. A defence of Mark's historical value requires more than a reference to Taylor's commentary. The acceptance of M as one of the written sources of Matthew is denied strongly by several American scholars, but they are ignored. The skilful case for John's independence of the Synoptics, made by Dr. Gardner Smith, is also ignored. There is no full treatment of Bultmann's "Demythologising". We need far more than the 900 words we are given on the political, social, economic and religious background in Galilee, Judea and the Roman Empire. Again, is it adequate to say with regard to the Lucan Infancy Stories that artistic imagination has been used with beautiful effect? Or that "The historian should take off his shoes because the ground is holy, but he must lay down his pen if he seeks to relate sober history"? Neo-orthodox scholars and conservative readers will dismiss this as the remnant of an outmoded Liberalism; and, while the present reviewer would not ally himself with such critics, it must be allowed that in a volume like this one looks for a more thorough discussion of the virginal conception and the probabilities of Bethlehem as the birthplace of Jesus.

Those who have the original essay in the *Interpreter's Bible* may be excused for thinking that this book is unnecessary, for its additional material does not increase the value of the outline in proportion. In Britain, however, the *Interpreter's Bible* is out of the reach of thousands because of its price, and many of them may be glad to read this sober and short statement. One would hesitate to recommend the book to undergraduates in Divinity or to anyone who wants a big Life of Christ. It is not a big Life, although it contains a few really suggestive passages.

Maclehose and Macmillan are to be congratulated on the printing and production of the book: I noticed slips on page 64 (Jesu in note 1 should be in italics) and page 106 (the 2 of the note is missing). The use of "Jesus's" (page 97) is harsh.

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The Apostolic Age. By G. B. Caird. London: Duckworth and Co., (Toronto: T. Nelson and Sons), 1955. Pp. 222. $2.50.

The dust cover describes Dr. Caird's book as produced for the use of students; and it should be said at once that nothing better could be put in their hands either as a stimulus to advanced New Testament studies or as

an introduction to the problems of the most difficult period in Church history. The work has a scope which no other, in English at least, quite parallels. It fills a long standing need.

But Principal Caird, who holds the chair of New Testament Language and Literature at McGill, has done far more than provide us with an orderly and clear text book. Here is a piece of creative theological workmanship which welds the results of the best scholarship in several related fields into a fresh synthesis designed to elucidate the thought and practice of Apostolic times. As Dr. Caird rightly observes, histories of this period have "tended to move lightly over the 'hidden years' of the early church in order to concentrate on the better documented period"—the Pauline. It is precisely this gap which he has set out to fill, and he has demonstrated how convincingly Paul can be presented not "as a solitary giant" but "as the inheritor of a living, growing tradition, which he in turn stimulated to more vigorous and more splendid vitality" (p. 116).

The author has achieved his aim by marshalling, with an entirely fresh cogency, the findings of historical and textual criticism in their bearing upon the development of doctrine, evangelism and organization. For example, he brings to our attention, and fits into his closely worked mosaic of reasoning, a recent study by Dr. C. H. Dodd on Old Testament proof-texts. This has refuted the assumption, based on Rendel Harris's *Testimonies,* that the texts were collected haphazardly by early Christians. Dr. Dodd has shown that certain portions were chosen to the neglect of others and possess a common 'plot' of three principal variations, a literary phenomenon which points back to a primitive selective principle. Dr. Caird goes on to suggest that we are left to choose between the mind of an "unknown genius" and the mind of Jesus as the source of this selection. He concludes: "There can be no doubt that Jesus possessed the quality of mind necessary for sustained and original thought. He would not have been given the title of Rabbi unless he had proved himself expert in the handling of Scripture; yet his teaching was recognized to be new and totally different from that of the scribes. And in the Gospels we repeatedly find him directing the attention of his disciples to the Scriptures which concerned himself. . . . His teaching, faithfully preserved by the apostles, determines the whole future development of Christian behaviour and Christian thought" (pp. 81f.).

The entire book offers impressive proof of the unanimity of faith and teaching in the New Testament and of the essential integrity of the record. Its apologetic value is therefore immense though incidental. The vexed question of Hellenistic distortion of the original Gospel is dealt with in the course of three chapters on "The Gentile Mission". Expounding the intellectual, religious and ethical problems which Christianity confronted as it moved out into the larger Roman world, Dr. Caird demonstrates how these evoked not compromises but certain strategic responses whose content lay ready to hand in the Old Testament and in the earliest dominical tradition. The section on the title *Kyrios* and the astral deities in this connection is particularly illuminating.

In the final chapter under this general heading the author discusses "the missionary's equipment". He gives careful attention to the work of Archbishop Carrington and Dean Selwyn in the application of Form Criticism to the Epistles to establish the existence of a formal catechism. Their evidence is usefully summarized. Not all of it, Dr. Caird thinks, is equally convincing but it at least reveals "a fixed and accepted pattern" which cannot be explained by literary dependence of one epistle upon another. "This means that already at an early date the Hellenistic church had discovered a sound alternative to the legalism of the Judaists, and was regularly demanding from its converts a high ethical standard as the logical outcome of that inner change which they underwent at the time of their admission to the church" (p. 113). The phrase "at an early date" is significant, since I Peter bulks large in the discussion; and it is reassuring to find a scholar of Dr. Caird's stature supporting a date in the early sixties for the larger portion of this epistle (1: 1-4: 11). He bases his contention partly on the epistle's reflections of relations between church and empire in a chapter on this subject entitled "Christ and Caesar".

There is a remarkably thorough discussion in a short space of the development of church order in a chapter on "The Period of Consolidation". It is refreshingly free from a wishful reading into the evidence of later rigidities. But the writer is perhaps a little too assured that the last word has been said regarding the certain identity of *episcopos* and *presbyteros*. The case presented by Walter Lowrie in his *Problems of Church Unity* (Longmans, 1924) never seems to have received due *presbyteros*. The case presented by Walter Lowrie in his "Problems of Church Unity" (Longmans, 1924) never seems to have received due attention. Briefly, he maintained that it was the position of elder which was not precisely enough defined to be accounted an 'office' until the early years of the second century. The elders were not 'ordained' to an office, he held, any more than were the elders of Judaism; and when, in Acts 24: 23, we read of the appointing of elders, it was to the office of bishop. Such an interpretation is supported with reference to Acts 20: 17, 28 and by the frequency of allusion to 'bishop' in the singular whereas the term 'elder' is used thus only when it is applied to an apostle.

Dr. Caird has put his readers very largely in his debt, and not least in his final chapter, "The Coming of the Lord", where he brings trenchant and constructive criticism to bear upon a problem of perennial concern. He gives full weight to Professor Dodd's "realized eschatology" but disagrees that misunderstanding of the Lord's teaching can account for the persistence of a "futurist eschatology". The key which he offers to eschatological thought is the "telescoping of time" as illustrated in Israelite liturgical worship. It leads to what is perhaps the most fruitful and convincing exposition since Sir Edwyn Hoskyns treated the subject in his Cambridge Sermons.

Chapters on the Roman Empire and first century Judaism open the book and introduce three which deal luminously with the first Christian

community in all its aspects. The writing here as everywhere is a model of that succinctness coupled with clarity which is all too rare. Scriptural references are full, as they should be in a work of this kind. Only one reference, to Amos 1: 11, seems to be wrong. The bibliography is good and bears witness, as the writing does, to the breadth of the author's scholarship. There are two useful appendices, one on the chronology of the period and one containing the references in Tacitus and Pliny to Christianity together with Trajan's rescript. The index is complete. The book is one in the series of Studies in Theology published under Dr. Nathaniel Micklem's editorship.

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Simon Peter the Fisherman. A Novel by KURT FRIEBERGER. Toronto: British Book Service, 1955. Pp. 365. 15s.

THIS is the first novel ever to be dedicated by permission to a pope; this one has achieved that distinction not only because of its origination in a speech of Pius XII in 1930 when Cardinal Pacelli was Papal Secretary of State but also, presumably, because of its quality.

Almost any historical novel is of value if it enables modern folk to visualize more vividly the characters and conditions of a very different age. This one which recreates the career of Peter from his early messianic nationalism to his final engaging in "teaching, advising, encouraging, comforting"—the administering of sacraments is significantly not, and hardly could be, included—is above the average in its grasp and presentation of social and religious life in Palestine and Italy in the first century. The distinguished Austrian author has done considerable literary and archaeological research. He could have weighted the scales in favour of Roman Catholicism far more than he does. Protestant readers, however, should be made aware that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is drawn without any suggestion of alienation from him as is implied in Mark 3, that Paul is made inferior in status to Peter and obliged to speak "words of atonement" (!) to him for his rebuke at Antioch, that Peter is represented as deeply concerned about the Gentiles and as supporting Paul over against the Judaizers, and that there are references to the Mass and to penance.

Those interested in literary and historical correctness should have it drawn to their attention that the Gospel of John is used indiscriminately with the Synoptics and indeed as indicating the course of Jesus' ministry, without any awareness that its narratives are to be interpreted not as historical incidents but as "signs" or symbolic pictures of the character of the eternal Son of God; that the first Gospel was written during Jesus' ministry by Matthew Levi and that Mark's Gospel was written afterwards, also without any dependence on written sources; that prominence is assigned

to miracles but without any appreciation of the fact that they were evidence of the inauguration of the Kingdom; that the age-old identification of Mary Magdalene, here made a mistress of Pilate, with the woman of the streets of Luke 7, and also with Mary of Bethany of Luke 10 and the woman who anointed Jesus, Mark 14, is adopted "for artistic reasons" but unfortunately for the perpetuation of unnecessary confusion; and that Peter is given much time at Rome as its bishop, indeed the bishop of the whole Graeco-Roman world. The implication of 1 Clement 5 in my judgment (*pace* Cullmann) is that while Paul was executed in Rome, the scene of Peter's martyrdom was elsewhere.

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The Evolution of the Christian Year. By A. Allan McArthur. London: S.C.M. Press, 1954. Pp. 192. $3.00.

The Evolution of the Christian Year has three aims or aspects. It is a competent piece of research into its subject; it presents an interesting theory of calendrical origins; and it uses its results to draw up suggestions for a further development of the Christian Year in the Church of Scotland.

The first Part deals with the Lord's Day, which it relates of course to the Jewish sabbath. It regards the Lord's Day as the primary Christian holy day, and its regular observance as the basis of the Christian Year. One may ask however whether the counting of weeks would be sufficient by itself to suggest a series of annual feasts and fasts, if this is what Dr. McArthur means. It may be basic without completely accounting for the origins of the calendar. (But see the researches of Sellin and Morgenstern for a Semitic year based on sabbaths and pentecosts.)

His second Part deals with Christmas and Epiphany which have no apparent Jewish antecedents; the third with Easter, and the fourth with Pentecost. The fifty-day period prior to Pentecost in the Jewish calendar was already reckoned from Sabbath to Sabbath in the Sadducee computation which began counting from the Sabbath after Passover, which was their date for the Omer; but Judaism adopted the Pharisee computation which kept Omer on Nisan 16 (two days after Passover) without regard to the day of the week. A rather similar diversity of usage appeared in the Christian church in the second century, the Asian Christians taking no account of the day of the week in observing their "Passover". Dr. McArthur has underestimated the amount of support for this "Johannine" tradition; for Athanasius and Chrysostom both state that Antioch was "Quartodeciman", and Athanasius adds Cilicia and Mesopotamia.

Dr. McArthur describes Passover and Pentecost as "unitive" festivals, since they united two commemorations, the crucifixion-and-resurrection in one case, and the ascension-and-sending-of-the Holy Spirit in the other,

(*The Epistula Apostolorum* (*ca.* A.D. 160) associates Pentecost with the expectation of Advent.) Each "unitive" festival thus enfolded a double commemoration, which divided in two at a later date, giving birth to Good Friday and Ascension Day; for in his opinion the primary festivals must have been specialised Sundays, though indeed he allows for a fast prior to Easter Sunday and for fifty days between Easter and Whitsunday.

The case of the "unitive" festival of Christmas-Epiphany is not so easy. December 25 and January 6 were both based on pagan festivals, and were in full swing in the fourth century: December 25 in Rome for the nativity; January 6 in the east for the nativity-and-baptism of the Lord. January 6 was by then a "unitive" festival. It first appeared in Alexandria in the second century as a commemoration of the baptism, but this was in a heretical body in which the baptism was regarded as a "birthday". Dr. McArthur regards January 6 as an old "unitive" festival of the church, and attempts to find antecedents for it in the fourth gospel. He brings forward interesting evidence, but he would admit that it might be stronger.

His theory is that the three "unitive" festivals provided the original form of the Christian Year, and he traces the development of Lent as a preparation for Easter, and Advent as a preparation for Christmas-Epiphany. (He does not notice the seven-week preparation for Epiphany in the Armenian calendar.) The question must be asked, however, whether the liturgical origins were actually so simple, and to what extent, if any, the idea of a rotation of feasts and fasts and holy seasons was a survival of the Hebrew liturgical year within which the oldest Christianity came into existence, and by which the gospels themselves were partly conditioned. Clement of Rome lays a good deal of emphasis on this calendar tradition in his fortieth chapter, and the continuation of the Passover-Pentecost season in the church certainly preserved the core of it. The old Jewish commemorations do not seem to have been lost to sight.

Further study might be given to the Montanist movement, and the computations of the "Alogi", Hippolytus, and various Christian scholars preserved by Clement of Alexandria in *Stromateis 1.21*; they may not be as irrelevant to his subject as Dr. McArthur suggests in his foot-note on pages 43-4. There are also the possible signs of calendrical usage in the gospels, including the non-canonical gospels, and the *Diatessaron* of Tatian.

There is much research to be done in this fascinating field of study. *The Evolution of the Christian Year*, with its fresh outlook and its sound judgement and its copious source-material, is a welcome introduction to the subject; for the author supplies a great quantity of the evidence on which his own work should be judged. It is to be hoped that he will continue his labours.

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